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Wellington County History

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Jesuit Novitiate, Guelph, ca.1919. Photo: WCMA ph 20275.

Sectarianism and Scandal: The 1918 Novitiate Raid in Guelph Township

by Debra Nash-Chambers

In 1913 the Society of Jesus founded St. Stanislaus Novitiate in Guelph Township just north of the City of Guelph.[1] After a somewhat peaceful coexistence with the city and the surrounding countryside, the Jesuit Fathers and their postulants were drawn into the climate of intrigue and suspicion that accompanied the end of federal policy of voluntary enlistment for military duty in the Great War. By the summer of 1917, voluntary recruitment was not meeting the Canadian manpower needs to reinforce the allied forces on the front lines overseas.[2] The legislative move toward conscription proceeded despite resistance within Quebec and once the Borden government gave assent to the Military Service Act in August of 1917 Wellington County papers were peppered with government advertisements explaining the need for soldiers and the anticipated draft of farmers' sons. Neither the federal government's demand for increased wartime farm production nor farmers' protests succeeded in exempting young men from farm families.[3] Troop strength and wartime patriotism were paramount concerns so the federal government's advertising urged all service-aged men from both rural and urban Canada to do their duty.[4] Beginning in 1914, overt and suspected signs of disloyalty to the war effort were fodder for the press and the government urged the citizenry to be ever vigilant for signs of subversive behaviour.[5] In Wellington and area, newspaper reports chronicled the search for military deserters and scrutinized the behaviour of the many German residents in the neighbouring Waterloo County.[6] Until Italy joined the allied war effort in 1915, the patriotism of Guelph's Italian population was questioned despite the Italian community's generous support of the city's subscription drives for the Patriot Fund.[7] Unfounded gossip claiming that the Jesuits on the Bedford farm were defying the Military Service Act began in the fall of 1917. A misunderstanding regarding the conscription exemption status of members of the Society of Jesus fed area speculation that the Jesuits at St. Stanislaus were not fully vested in Canada's war effort. Then, in June of 1918, the novitiate became the eye of the storm as a national scandal erupted following the sensationalized press coverage of a

secret military raid on the facility in search of rumoured draft evaders. Rev. W.D. Spence of the Guelph Ministerial Association helped to incite controversy by reporting to the press that local recruiter Henry Westoby "had been balked in every move he made to get them. The Dominion Police were down here at least ten times and they were balked every time."[8] The institution and its residents remained the targets of unfounded stories and festering sectarian hostility until a Royal Commission Report exonerated the Jesuit administrator and the novitiate's novices, juniors and defenders in the autumn of 1919.

Two years earlier, the federal government began to announce the registration procedures for the Military Service Act. Local concerns about the Jesuit community's compliance with conscription regulations began in October of that year. Efforts to diffuse Protestant criticism were complicated by a federal election campaign that promoted religious acrimony between Catholics and Protestants. The negative reaction of the majority of French Canadians to the concept of military conscription still strained Protestant- Catholic relations in Quebec and elsewhere in the country. During the prelude to the December 1917 election, local Protestant concern about the patriotism of Canada's Catholic institutions was manipulated by political operatives. Prominent Ontario businessmen lobbying for the re-election of Prime Minister Borden's coalition government organized newspaper advertisements which questioned the loyalty of both Quebec and Catholic institutions to the nation and to the British Empire.[9] A testimonial in the *Elora Express* opined that German infiltrators and a united front of French Canadian Catholics in Quebec were working against the war effort and the interests of the Crown.[10] The published statement also attempted to stir anti- Catholic sentiment by noting a possible plot by Quebeckers to expand the number of bilingual separate schools in the nation.[11] Following the election, Rev. W.D. Spence, President of the Guelph Ministerial Association, acted upon his misgivings about the trustworthiness of Catholic institutions by sending an official complaint to the district military headquarters in London, Ontario accusing the Jesuits at the Guelph novitiate of non compliance with registration regulations of the Military Service Act. [12] The climate of mistrust surrounding the conduct of the residents of St. Stanislaus Novitiate escalated as the June 1st registration deadline for military service approached.

Beginning in February of 1918, the Guelph Ministerial Association became determined that an apparent pro-Catholic bias in the application of the Military Service Act be challenged. The students at St. Stanislaus Novitiate became their test-case for the equitable conscription of Protestant and Catholic seminarians and their erroneous contentions promoted local gossip about the patriotism of the Jesuits and their students. Wild stories about the members of the novitiate community abounded. Some of the institution's detractors speculated that Mennonite pacifists from Waterloo County were hiding at the novitiate.[13] Other detractors believed the novitiate was a hideout for the sons of wealthy Catholics trying to escape registration for military service.[14] Many critics simply did not comprehend the complexities of the Military Service

Act's clergy exception for ministers of all religious denominations and the "members of any recognized orders of exclusively religious character" that existed in Canada prior to the act becoming law.[15] To verify the exemption status of the novitiate's novices and juniors, Father Henri Bourque, Rector and Master of Students, arranged for certificates of membership in the Society of Jesus to be carried if they left the novitiate grounds. In the anticipation of reinforcing their legal status, the novices were tonsured during a visit by the Bishop of Hamilton in September of 1917.[16] Despite the legal qualification for exemption of the young residents at St. Stanislaus Novitiate under the clergy exception, and assurances from the Minister of Justice that they need not register for medical screening, local Protestant clergy and civilian recruiters pressed 'Father Bourque to have the novices and juniors submit to military medicals to facilitate classification for future compulsory service.

Protestant clergy and local politicians had been involved in promoting enlistment throughout Ontario since the war began. City of Guelph Alderman, Henry Westoby, was a civilian registrar and secretary- treasurer of the local enlistment league. He was incensed by Father Bourque's refusal to provide him with a list of young men eligible for military screening. Bourque had no compelling legal reason to provide a list for Westoby as the young men were exempt, but the Jesuit's lack of a response was misconstrued as defiance. In addition to Registrar Westoby and members of the Guelph Ministerial Association, many Canadian military officials lacked a clear understanding of the nuances of the conscription statute's clergy exception themselves. They were in no position to counter the complaints of disgruntled civilian registrars or the mounting rhetoric of the Guelph Ministerial Association. As tensions mounted in Guelph, there was a hue and cry that Protestant seminaries were being depleted of healthy service-aged men while Catholic societies like the Jesuits ignored the law. On behalf of his fellow Protestant ministers in Guelph, Rev. Spence later defended his outspokenness with the impassioned plea:

> We are not guided by intolerance in this feeling. We do not want ill-feeling with our Catholic friends. We admire and honour those who have joined up. But you can't go into a Protestant college today and find one fit man there. Even some ordained ministers were not allowed exemption. There should not be two laws in this country - one for Protestants and one for Catholics.[17]

Initially ministers and divinity students of all faiths were included in the exemptions to compulsory service in the first draft of Canadian conscription legislation. The original bill was a facsimile of contemporary American legislation defining eligibility for a military draft. Ironically, the protection for divinity students was dropped at the insistence of Orange- lodge affiliated politicians who sought retribution for the anti-conscription rioting of French Canadian students at Laval University in Quebec.[18] This short sighted revision created a depletion of the ranks at Protestant seminaries as divinity students

were required to meet conscription regulations. Consequently, the failure of Father Bourque to heed local overtures to provide names of young men for the registration process exacerbated the anger of locals who believed that Catholics were evading the law.[19] Faced with reports that enlistment evaders were welcomed at the Guelph novitiate, officials in Ottawa decided some action to fact-find and clarify the situation was justified.[20] Military officials in Ottawa later claimed that a botched communique directed military officers in London to "clear out" rather than "clear up" the situation at the novitiate.[21] This critical miscommunication resulted in a poorly executed undercover raid.

On June 7, 1918, military officials from the headquarters in London, Ontario made a night time raid on the St. Stanislaus Novitiate. By then, gossip-mongering in Guelph fell into two general categories of inflammatory rumours: reports that the Jesuits were harbouring draft evaders and conveying them to their farm by underground tunnels, and, outrageous local tales that members of this Jesuit community had a cannon and were stockpiling munitions on their grounds.[22] Guided by an awareness of local hysteria and a prudent desire to avoid local interference, the June 7th Novitiate Raid was planned to be unannounced, at night and in plain clothes. The military exercise was carried out by military police under the authority of the London military headquarters and commanded in the field by Captain Macauley, Assistant Provost Marshall. Inspector Minard of the Dominion Police accompanied the military detail as an observer and the two officers travelled to Guelph with nine other men. After circulating in downtown Guelph in smaller groups and trying to blend in, the detail took a streetcar to the stop nearest the northern town limits and then proceeded to the novitiate. One man secured the gate and three men watched the grounds to cover attempted escapes or other activity on the perimeter of the main novitiate structure. After a search of the grounds, entrance to the novitiate residence was facilitated by a knock on the front door and the co-operation of Father Bourque.

Despite the three hour duration of the investigation, the Novitiate Raid concluded after midnight with no appreciable results and a pattern of execution that has been described as "a comic opera".[23] No weapons were found. None of the three men identified as resident draft dodgers in advance of the raid was on the premises.[24] There was no evidence that the Jesuits were using a fabled underground tunnel system to transfer enlistment evaders, enemy aliens or pacifists to the safety of the novitiate grounds. Three young men identified as possible registration shirkers were arrested but never exited St. Stanislaus to be taken before a magistrate or moved to the headquarters in London. The prospect of this ill-fated debacle becoming an embarrassing incident with far reaching consequences was heightened by the arrest and attempted removal of Marcus Doherty, son of the federal Minister of Justice.

Ultimately a phone call to the novitiate from Adjutant for Canada, Major General Ashton, in Ottawa, terminated the raid and sent Macauley and his men back to London to file a report.[25] The Jesuits' telephone proved to be a critical device in derailing the raid. Early on, Father Bourke consulted Judge Hayes of

Guelph before he complied with Macauley's demands. Without the phone it would have been difficult to summon the novitiate's lawyer, Mr. Patrick Kerwin, to the novitiate that night. The most important call was Marcus Doherty's telephone conversation with his father in Ottawa. The call would spark later accusations that Doherty abused his Cabinet position to protect his son.[26] The Justice Minister contacted Captain Macauley via the novitiate's telephone and warned him that the raid was illegal as the clergy exemption covered those at the novitiate. When the Captain rebuffed the advice given by the Hon. Charles Doherty, the Justice Minister telephoned military officials in Ottawa who then ordered Captain Macauley to abandon the raid. Overall, access to the novitiate phone undercut the plans for the raid and drew attention to the slipshod character of the military exercise.

A post-raid report by a military chaplain who was visiting the novitiate the night of the raid contributed to the military's position that Macauley had exhibited poor judgement. A year after the raid, officials presiding over the Royal Commission inquiry reviewed the submission of Captain Hales Kingston, SJ, as well as other accumulated evidence and upheld the military's opinion that Captain Macauley showed poor judgement while he was in charge of the military policing exercise. Macauley's failure to present the orders validating his undercover manoeuvre was viewed as particularly egregious.[27] Captain Macauley's refusal to present the orders authorizing the raid to Father Bourque that night was against protocol but his failure to respect Kingston's request for him to present the orders was sheer folly because the chaplain out-ranked him. What Macauley viewed as a nuisance request set him up as the scapegoat for the bungled raid and hurried his post-raid transfer to Winnipeg.[28] Later investigations of the raid indicated that in addition to the other lapses in judgement, Macauley blundered by ignoring the fact that Father William Power, Superior-General of the Society of Jesus in Canada, was visiting the novitiate overnight and had first hand knowledge of the execution of the raid.

Upon further post-raid scrutiny by military officials, none of the men placed in temporary custody was declared to be in violation of the Military Service Act. Young Doherty had already been rejected for enlistment by Protestant doctors before his decision to become a tonsured member of the Jesuit religious community.[29] When a federally-ordered press ban on news of the raid was breached, the government was forced to address the raid in a climate of anti-Catholic backlash and the religious affiliation of those who found Marcus Doherty medically unfit for duty before his decision to become a Jesuit gained importance. The other two novices subject to temporary arrest, Andrew Schmidt and George Nunan, were also legally exempt from military registration. A demobilized soldier working as a lay brother at the novitiate was questioned in the days after the raid on the assumption that he was a possible shirker, but he proved to be a discharged soldier with a distinguished service record.[30] The soldier, Pte. O'Leary, would later re-enlist in the army. Higher ranked officers left Captain Macauley and his superior Major Hirsch, the Provost Marshall, to shoulder the blame as they tried to disassociate themselves

from the fiasco. The London headquarters was spared further embarrassment when a raid planned for June 8th on St. Jerome's College in Kitchener, Ontario was cancelled as were prospective raids on Catholic institutions in Stratford and Windsor.[31]

It made little difference that the military's preliminary investigation in Guelph just days after the raid unearthed no illegal activity at the novitiate. Firmly believing that the lack of legal consequences for the Jesuits proved an anti-Protestant bias in the application of the Military Service Act, Rev. Spence and Rev. Kennedy Palmer of the Guelph Ministerial Association took their accusations to the Toronto press in defiance of the censorship ban. The emotionalism of the ministers' appeal for justice and the whiff of a political scandal precipitated a flood of reporters from the Toronto press into Guelph at the end of June. Until local businessmen feared that the uproar might give Guelph a bad name and hurt long term prosperity, Guelph papers shared in the news frenzy. Elsewhere in Wellington County only the *Fergus News Record* covered the story of the Novitiate Raid. A reprint of a statement from Ottawa titled "St. Stanislaus Raid" promised that anyone evading military service at the novitiate would be drafted.[32]

As the scandal broke in the press, the sanctuaries of Rev. Spence's Congregationalist Church and Palmer's St. Paul's Presbyterian Church were full to overflowing. Rev. Spence was carried away by events and told his flock and visitors that Jesuit priests were duplicitous and capable of believing that a lie made in favour of the Church could be seen as the truth.[33] The local press quoted his impassioned sermon the Sunday after the censorship ban was breached. According to the coverage of this sermon in the *Guelph Mercury*, Spence raised the question, "Are Roman Catholics with us in this war?" and he furthered his indictment of Catholic religious leaders in his assertion that:

> ... once again the Roman Catholic Church has become a political power and God help the Empire were she to allow her neck to come under the yoke of Roman hierarchy. The Church that had not one word to say in the denunciation of the rape of Belgium is now gratuitously interfering in an issue which has nothing to do with the free exercise of spiritual privileges.[34]

While he made less caustic statements, Palmer revelled in the allure of a packed sanctuary at morning and evening services as the scandal attracted news coverage by papers from Guelph, Kitchener and Toronto. Shortly after achieving press notoriety, Palmer left Spence to deal with the local campaign and he graduated to a speaking tour of supportive Protestant churches beyond Guelph and Orange Lodge assemblages. The heavily Orange federal election district of Frontenac resolved to offer its moral and its financial support to the crusade.[35] Federal politicians proud of their association with the Loyal Orange Lodge supported Palmer's pronouncement that "[i]f strictly religious societies were exempted under this act without any qualification, members of the

Masons and Orange Lodge might be included because they were exclusively religious organizations."[36]

Locally, the machinations of Spence and Palmer shocked local Roman Catholics and embarrassed many members of Guelph's Protestant community. Not all members of the Guelph Ministerial Association supported the hyperbolic statements and the tactics adopted by Spence and Palmer on their behalf. A post-raid pamphlet underwritten by the association in defence of their cause claimed it was not the product of intolerance or bigotry but a sense of justice and a demand for "equal rights for all".[37] Apparently, not all Protestant ministers agreed with the June sermon declarations and press interviews. Rev. Edwin Pearson, father of Lester B. Pearson, chose not to have the congregation of Norfolk Methodist Church join the fray. Like the ministers responsible for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and Guelph's Anglican faithful, Pearson chose not to address the scandal from his pulpit. Only an allusion to the crisis was made by Father Doyle of the Church of Our Lady in Guelph. He comforted his parishioners with the assertion that the Church was "built upon a rock"and it would be strengthened by adversity.[38]

Faced with sensational headlines, inflammatory statements in press accounts, and a possible lawsuit on behalf of the Jesuits, an apology from the Ministry of Militia and Defence was forwarded to Father Bourque and the Society of Jesus. The apology from General Mewburn read, "I can assure you that the error in judgement committed by this officer will be dealt with in a proper way, as I will not tolerate any such action on the part of a military officer so far as the operation of the Military Service Act goes."[39] The gesture fanned the controversy rather than quelling it and Rev. Kennedy Palmer left the needs of his Guelph mission church behind as he was thrust into the forefront of a concerted, yearlong sectarian crusade to expose Catholic impropriety in the application of the Military Service Act at the novitiate and to defend the actions of Captain Macauley whose previously distinguished military record had been tarnished by the Novitiate Raid. Amid the relentlessness of Palmer's Orange Lodge supported campaign the Hon. Charles Doherty and other Catholic politicians were accused of subverting the procedural process leading to the passage of the Military Service Act. Political pressure for an official federal inquiry mounted. No one could convince the Orange politicians of their own imprudence in drafting the bill that was given assent and vocal, sustained outrage made the

The Honourable Hugh Guthrie, as he appeared in the portrait of Wellington County Council, 1928.
Photo: WCMA ph 678 [part].

St. Stanislaus' Novitiate, Guelph, ca.1919. Photo: WCMA ph 20276.

Royal Commission investigation into the Jesuit Raid inevitable. In April of 1919, Sir Sam Hughes MP, a proud Orangeman and a former Minister of the Militia and Defence, made a motion in the House of Commons for a Royal Commission inquiry into the unanswered questions arising from the Jesuit Raid controversy. After five hours of debate, the motion succeeded and the subsequent Royal Commission hearings began months later in the fall of 1919.[40]

None of the charges made by Hughes or Rev. Palmer was supported by the official report at the conclusion of the Royal Commission. Much to his chagrin, outspoken agitator, Rev. Kennedy H. Palmer, was forced to defend his own behaviour. Palmer's lawyer failed to substantiate the claim that his client functioned as a confidant of the Hon. Hugh Guthrie, Solicitor General and MP for Wellington South.[41] However, Guthrie successfully disassociated himself from Palmer in his hearing testimony. In the end, the Royal Commission exonerated the Hon. Hugh Guthrie, the Hon. Charles Doherty and Father Bourque. Macauley and Hirsh were saddled with the verdict that they exercised poor judgement in the conduct of the raid. Their defence was handicapped by a more senior officer's apparent wilful destruction of the controversial communique from Ottawa that set the raid in motion and other documents that might have bolstered their defence.[42] The raid misadventure not only embarrassed the sitting government, the national scandal undermined Canada's war effort by hurting the reputation of the military and accentuating divisions within the Canadian population at a time that the country was at war and unity was important to the domestic war effort.[43]

Throughout the troubled times of 1917-1919, St. Stanislaus Novitiate

continued to educate young men and support its mission with the proceeds of the novitiate farm enterprises. Father Bourque left the novitiate in 1919 to become the Rector at College de St-Boniface and a member of the Senate of the University of Manitoba. He is fondly remembered by fellow Jesuits for his ardent defence of the novitiate and his "restraint and gentlemanly conduct despite the ineptness of military authorities" during the Jesuit Raid.[44] By the fall of 1919, the members of the Society of Jesus and their neighbours in Guelph were eager to focus on wartime recovery and close a very unpleasant chapter in local history. Ironically, the sectarianism and scandal surrounding the Jesuit Raid has received limited historical coverage until recent years.[45]

NOTES:

This paper is part of a larger work on Guelph, Ontario from 1861-1919. It was adapted from a paper presented to the annual meeting of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association, at The Learned Societies meetings held in London, Ontario, June 2005. The paper was titled " 'Common Fairness and Equal Rights to All': The Public Good and Religious Equity in Guelph, Ontario, 1867-1919".

1 See the land acquisition history for St. Stanislaus Novitiate and lots 3-8, Section D, Concession 3, Guelph Township in the Tweedsmuir History of the West End Women's Institute, Guelph Township, pp.139-141.

2 In the fall of 1917, 100,000 men were needed to meet the manpower needs at the front. See the *Elora Express*, October 31, 1917.

3 *Ibid*, October 31, 1917 and June 26, 1918. Farmers lost their bid for the exemption of farmers' sons but a Leave of Absence program was introduced in the late spring of 1918.

4 Versions of the Military Service Act were printed in a various editions of county papers. See the *Elora Express*, November 28, 1917 and April 11, 1018, the *Arthur Expositor*, April 13, 1918 and May 30, 1918 and the *Fergus News Record*, June 27, 1918.

5 Concerns about the patriotism of non-British ethnic groups began early in the war and continued as the war progressed. The capture of German spies complicated the public perception of Germans and Austro-Hungarians in Canada. Barbara M. Wilson, ed. *Ontario and the First World War* (Toronto, 1977) p. ixx. Citizens of Berlin, Ontario were pressured to change the name of their community to Kitchener and when local politicians entertaining the return to the former name were leading in the post-election polls on the evening of

January 1, 1917, the *News Record was* vandalized and candidates from the Citizens' League were attacked by local soldiers waiting for mobilization. The *Guelph Daily Mercury and Advertiser* covered the election events in Kitchener on January 2nd and paid particular attention to the issue of patriotism in the nearby city. See Wilson, p. Ixxxii and Kenneth McLaughlin, *Germans in Canada,* Canadian Historical Association Pamphlet, 1985, p.5.

6 See "Elora Tribunal" in the *Elora Express,* November 28, 1917 regarding false claims for exemptions and "Military Notes" in the *Arthur Expositor,* June 6, 1918 re the search for deserters in the Erin area earlier in the spring. In the fall of 1914 farmers of German heritage from Waterloo County met to publicly proclaim their loyalty to the Crown. See the *Berlin Telegraph,* November 15, 1914.

7 *Guelph Mercury,* January 14, 1914 and August 13, 1914.

8 *Guelph Mercury,* June 24, 1918.

9 "Is a United Quebec to Rule all Canada?" in the *Elora Express* December 12. 1917.

10 *Ibid.*

11 Anti-papal agitation was also common among Loyal Orange Lodge members and other Protestants due to Pope Benedict XV's neutral stance throughout the war. See Mark Reynolds, "The Jesuit Raid", *The Beaver,* Vol. 82, No. 1, 2002, p.26.

12 Robert Rutherdale, *Hometown Horizons: Local Responses to Canada s Great War* (Vancouver and Toronto, 2004) p. 108.

13 The vulnerable military exemption status of Waterloo County's Mennonite population is discussed in Geoffrey Hayes, *Waterloo County: An Illustrated History of Waterloo (Waterloo,* 1997) p. 129.

14 Father Power, Superior of the Society of Jesus in Canada, would declare that anyone who understood the rigors of life as a novice or junior in the religious society would never have viewed it as a temporary haven. A young man who entered under false pretences would not meet the moral requisites of the dedication of one's life to the order and would be found out and asked to leave. See *Mercury,* June 24, 1918.

15 The Military Service Act, 1917, *Statutes of Canada,* 7-8 George V, Chap. 29, Assented to 29 August 1917 reprinted in Dave De Brou and Bill Waiser, eds. *Documenting Canada, A History of Modern Canada in Documents* (Saskatoon, 1992) pp. 241-245.

16 See Rutherdale, *Hometown Horizons,* p. 181.

17 A post-raid interview with Rev. Spence on the position of the Guelph Ministerial Association published in the *Guelph Mercury* June 24, 1918.

18 Reynolds, *The Beaver,* p.26 and *The Toronto Star,* June 24, 1918 in The Jesuit Raid in Guelph and Missions. Jesuit Archives, Toronto. The June 26, 1918 issue of the *Orange Sentinel* in the same collection attributed the change in the clergy exception that exempted the Jesuits to pressure on the Hon. Charles Doherty, Minister of Justice from the Jesuits themselves.

19 The Report of the 1919 Royal Commission would conclude that Rev. Kennedy Palmer and the Guelph Ministerial Association were wrong and that the assertion

that the novitiate was a haven for defaulters was incorrect. See the reprint of the report in Wilson, *Ontario,* pp. 58-69.

20 Concern that civilians had obtained military exemptions due to a flawed process or by fraud arose due to the number of single, childless men between 19 and 25 who were declared unfit for active duty. The government distributed questionnaires to reassess claims. See the *Flora Express,* April 3, 1918. As of June 1st, 1918 Major Hirsch, Provost Marshall, was to send a questionnaire to St. Stanislaus Novitiate from London in view of the civilian and ministerial complaints in Guelph. The flawed instruction from Ottawa thwarted this approach. See the Royal Commission testimony coverage in the *Mercury,* September 19, 1919.

21 Royal Commission Report in Wilson, *Ontario,* p.61 and Brian F. Hogan, CSB. "The Guelph Raid: Conscription and Sectarian Stress During the Great War", for Prof. Moir, May 1970, University of Toronto, p.9. in the files Guelph and Missions, Jesuit Raid. Jesuit Archives, Toronto. This research was published by Hogan as: "The Guelph Raid: Conscription, Censorship and Bigotry in the Great War". *Canadian Historical Association, Study Sessions* 45 (1978): 57-80.

22 Leo Johnson, *History of Guelph* (Guelph, 1977) p.314 and Hogan, "The Guelph Raid", unpublished paper, Jesuit Archives, p.22.

23 Kenneth McLaughlin, Gerald Stortz and James Wahl, *Enthusiasm for the Truth, An Illustrated History of St. Jerome's University* (Waterloo, 2002) p.lll.

24 See the testimony of Captain Macauley in *The Royal Commission Report* reprinted in Wilson, *Ontario,* 61. Macauley had been given a list of men thought to be evaders with the names Craig, Newman and Alexander.

25 Major General E.G. Ashburton, Adjutant General for Canada, called off the raid after a call from Justice Minister Doherty because he believed Macauley was without authority and his procedures were improper. His Royal Commission testimony was covered by the *Guelph Mercury* in the September 19, 1919 edition. In earlier testimony Captain Macauley revealed that the Minister of Justice was very angry when he called. See *Mercury* September 16, 1919.

26 The accusation was made by the Guelph Ministerial Association in a pamphlet they published after the raid in June of 1918. See *A Statement and an Editorial in connection of the Jesuit Novitiate Case,* Guelph Ministerial Association, 1918, p.7. The Novitiate Case. The Guelph Civic Museum and Archives. Also, *Mercury,* September 12, 1919.

27 Macauley would testify that the chaplain was to blame for the failure of the raid as he encouraged outside interference. See the *Mercury,* September 19, 1919 The judges felt Macauley was treated leniently in just being transferred and not facing other penalties. See Wilson, *Ontario,* p.67. Hogan concluded that Macauley was the scapegoat in his unpublished paper. See, The Guelph Raid", p.66.

28 *Ibid*. Hogan agreed with the Protestant pastors that Macauley was a scapegoat. See "The Guelph Raid", p.66.

29 Wilson, *Ontario,* p.69 and the *Fergus News Record,* June 17, 1917.

30 *Mercury,* June 25, 1918.

31 *Ibid,* June 20, 1918 and Wilson, *Ontario,* p.60.

32 *Fergus News Record,* June 17, 1918.

33 *Mercury,* June 24, 1918.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Mercury,* July 10, 1918.

36 *The Evening Telegraph,* July 8, 1918. The Jesuit Raid. Jesuit Archives.

37 Pamphlet, Guelph Ministerial Association, p.2. The association's statements in this document made it clear that they were seeking common fairness and redress for a perceived unequal application of the Military Service Act based upon religious adherence.

38 *Mercury,* June 24, 1918.

39 *The Evening Telegraph,* June 25, 1918 and Reynolds, "The Jesuit Raid", p.29.

40 Reynolds, "The Jesuit Raid", p.30 and the *Mercury,* September 19, 1919.

41 *Mercury,* September 16, 1918.

42 Wilson, *Ontario,* p.67.

43 Hogan, "The Guelph Raid", p.2.

44 Angus J. Macdougall, *et al,.Dictionary of Jesuit Biography, Men to English Canada, 1843-1987.* (Toronto, 1991) *p.22.*

45 See Rutherford, *Homefront Horizon s,* p. 179. Rutherford drew this conclusion in 2004. Two years prior to this, Reynolds' article appeared in *The Beaver* and it was the first published assessment since the work by Hogan, Wilson and Johnson reflected on this topic in the 1970s.

Volunteer Home Guards in Wellington County

by Ross W. Irwin

Home guards were established in Wellington County both during World War I and World War II.

On September 3, 1914, Admiral Story called a meeting in Guelph. Present were Colonels Clark, Davidson, Macdonald, McCrae, and White. An Army and Navy Veterans Home Guard was formed, eventually numbering 100 men, of which 45 enlisted the first day.

Before war was declared in September 1939, the Canadian Legion urged that veterans of World War I be used to form a Vigilante Corps to guard against activity by a "fifth column" [a term derived from the Spanish Civil War of 1936, to describe a clandestine subversive organization working within a country to further an invading enemy's military and political aims]. The Guelph Board of Light and Power hired special guards for their facilities and in November provided them with uniforms. Guelph City Council provided guards for the fire hall. These efforts were short lived due to cost and shortage of labour.

In the meantime agitation by the Canadian Legion spurred the National government to establish a Veterans Home Guard, which was formed May 20,1940. On June 4, 1940, an initial 11 recruits were accepted from Guelph for the guard, which was disbanded March 31, 1947. These units were primarily used to guard prisoner-of-war camps and important industrial plants.

In December 1957, during the "cold war", a Civil Defence Committee was established by County Council. It met January 9, 1958 to organize a volunteer unit with headquarters just north of the Guelph city boundary on Highway 6.

Wellington County Volunteer Civil Guard

Wellington County was quick to assist in the war effort. The Moorefield Patriotic Society Fund organized November 29, 1939, was one of the first to give grants for war purposes.

On June 4, 1940, Gordon D. Conant, the Attorney-General, sent out regulations regarding the formation of units. At a meeting June 15, 1940, Wellington County Council appointed a Special War Efforts Committee which

met for the first time that day. It was decided to organize a Volunteer Civil Guard. Throughout Ontario, some 30,000 men enrolled.

The Objectives of the Guard were:

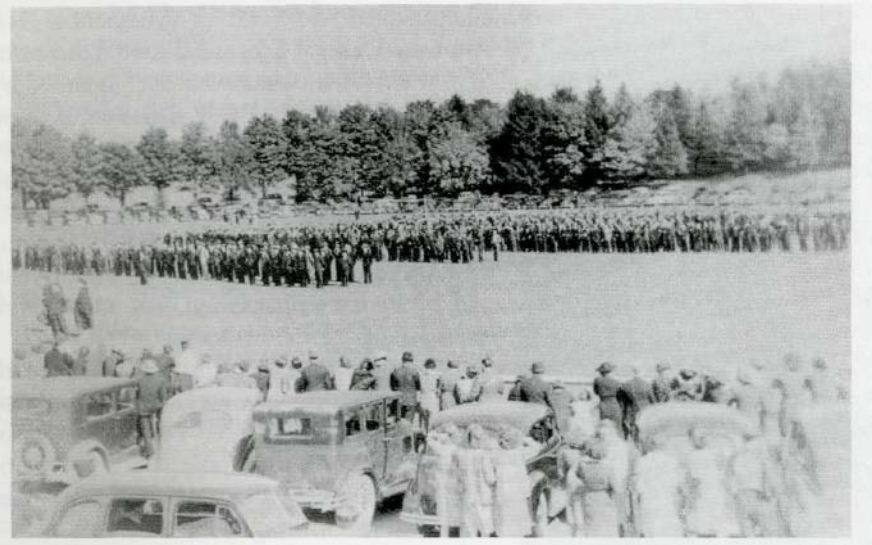
1. To provide a body of men for internal security
2. To assist the civil power by coordination with police and law
3. To protect life and property from sabotage
4. To control subservient activities
5. To assist any rail protection organizations
6. To assist in fighting fires

It was not primarily a military organization, though each member received training for his or her duties. The first and most important aim was to prevent sabotage and provide protection in each municipality for vital spots in case of fire or any other emergency, and to cooperate with the Provincial police. All officers were sworn in as Special Constables and took the Oath of Allegiance.

Wellington County Civic Home Guard

A meeting, including all the Reeves, was held at the Court House July 4, 1940, as a preliminary step to form a Civic Home Guard for the County of Wellington. John Clark, Governor of the Wellington County jail, was prominent in civic guard activities and spoke to the assembly. The meeting agreed a civil guard should be formed in the county. The Warden appointed, as Commander-in-Chief of the Wellington County Guard, William H. Keith, the County Engineer; J.F. Beattie, the County Clerk, was his Staff Captain. Keith reported to Attorney-General Conant, as Ontario Commander-in-Chief.

Company / Location	Strength	District/Company Commanders
District 1		*Lt.-Col. Nickel, Harriston*
A Harriston, Minto, Clifford	80	Fred W. Hardy
B Palmerston, Minto, Maryborough	–	R.P. D'Alton, Palmerston
C Arthur, Luther, Peel, Maryborough	102	G.G. Connell, Manager, Royal Bank
D Drayton, Peel, Maryborough		Wm. Lee
District 2		*J .L. Cameron, Elora*
E Elora, Pilkington, Peel	130	Dr. R.J.B. Bayne
F Fergus, West Garafraxa	64	P.H. Fisher, Manager, Royal Bank
G Erin, Eramosa, Hillsburgh	110	D.L. Mundell
H Rockwood, Eramosa, Guelph Twp.	75	Sims McLean
J Puslinch, Guelph Twp.	64	George Hall
K Nichol, Guelph Twp.	92	T .M. Revell
M Clifford		Wm. Mack
Total	**847**	



A crowd estimated at 5,000 gathered at Victoria Park, Fergus, in September 1940, for the inspection of the Wellington County Home Guard.

Photo: WCMA ph 10907.

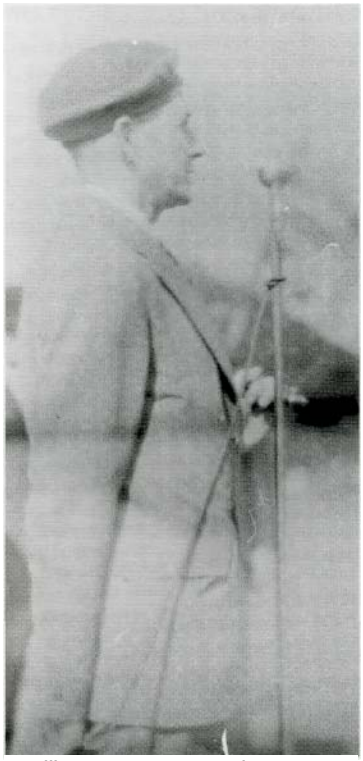
Every municipality in the County organized a unit for home guard duties. There were two district commanders - Lt-Col. Nickle for the northern District 1, and J .L. Cameron for the southern District 2. The organization is shown below. Companies were set up in 11 districts with a company commander appointed by the Reeve or Council of the local municipality:

In addition (not in table) Capt. A.C. F. Winslow, o/c Arthur Twp., Mount Forest and Kenilworth, stated he had 130 on roll and was exclusively a "secret service squad". This company was formed July 16, 1940 and had two drills a week. This company was not part of the County guard.

Each company or platoon represented a municipality and consisted of about 100 men - five sections of 20 and four groups per section, responsible for First Aid, Traffic, Riot, Arms and Transport. The Guard was "to assemble after some signal is given."

There were a few sessions of foot drill and companies attended a series of four lectures dealing with history, general organization and legal aspects of the work; however, the Attorney-General did not issue a training syllabus until August 3, 1940, and by that time enthusiasm was waning.

The highlight of the Wellington County Home Guard was the assembly and inspection at Fergus on September 22, 1940. The headline in the *Guelph Mercury*, September 23, 1940: "Thousands see County Guard Inspected" by the Hon. Gordon Conant. K.C.. Almost 1,000 men were on the parade and the audience numbered 5,000. H.S. McCreedy, Deputy Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police expressed his approval for the organization. Conant provided distinctive arm bands to the unit and Magistrate Frederic Watt, K.C.,



Wellington County engineer William H. Keith at the inspection of the Wellington County Home Guard, September 1940. **Photo: WCMA ph 10908.**

administered the Oath of Allegiance. The Attorney-General addressed the Guard prior to a March Past, which was accompanied by the Fergus Citizen Band and Fergus Pipe Band, as well as a band from Mount Forest. Two Fergus veterans, William Blyth and William Low were standard bearers..

Most Guard members had no previous military training; it was a busy time of year, and without compensation, not much took place following the inspection.

Nothing more is recorded of the Guard until Commander-in-Chief Keith submitted his resignation to Warden D.S. Leitch as of October 16, 1940, stating the work of organization was complete and that other bodies were fulfilling the mandate.

Warden Leitch reported "It has been over a year since the general inspection of the County Volunteer Civil Guard and since that time there has been no occasion to call the Guard together nor has there been any general activity. Despite the efforts of the Special War Efforts Committee and Mr Keith, it has been impossible to gain any Provincial instructions or guidance. The Canadian Reserve Army are to take over the work of the Volunteer Civil Guard."

The Warden then suggested the Guard be disbanded and superseded, where wished, by local Civilian Defence Corps. In the meantime the Special War Efforts Committee of County Council (Arnold! Darroch, Chairman; John F. Beattie, Secretary) had been endeavouring to have the Department of National Defence organize an active military body to be identified as a Wellington County unit (like the 153rd Canadian Expeditionary Force [C.E.F.] Battalion of WW I); this did not meet with a great deal of] encouragement. The Wellington County Home Guard was disbanded October I 16, 1941.

County Council supported the home effort by levying a rate of one mill for grants to local groups, principally the Red Cross. A Soldiers of the Soil committee was established August 14, 1940, and a program to collect scrap was instituted November 10, 1942.

Guelph Volunteer Civil Guard

A mass meeting of citizens was held May 20, 1940 to promote the formation of

a local guard. The Canadian Legion urged the formation of a Vigilante corps to guard against fifth column activity. At City Council on May 31, 1940, Alderman Bennett moved a motion that a home guard be formed which would include all males ages 18 to 60. Mayor W.G. Taylor appointed Col. L.E. Jones as commander of the guard on June 6,1940. The following day an advertisement stated the home Guard was to be organized immediately and persons were to register at the police station.

Chief Constable Harold Nash was in charge of the guard and John Clark, Governor of the Wellington County jail, was Adjutant, with Capt. C.L.C. Allinson as Staff Captain.

The Civic Guard took over the old police office in the city hall annex and asked residents for the loan of firearms for safekeeping. They advertised for female stenographers and 80 applied. The Guelph Civic Guard asked City Council for a grant of $300 on October 7, 1940.

Guelph was divided into four sections, named A, B, C, and D platoons. Company T representing the Township of Puslinch was attached to the Guelph unit in January 1941.

A Traffic Control section of 50 was formed for riot and sabotage control. The St. John's Ambulance practised stretcher drills. There was also a section of transport drivers and an Auxiliary Services platoon.

Judge R.S. Clark delivered the first of four lectures, June 26, 1940, on the duties of citizens, noting they should be alert for subversive statements or activity. Monday night parade-square drills took place in Exhibition Park. Fire drill, target practice, map reading and outdoor schemes were a part of the program, much of it under B.S.M. Neil Cummings of the local artillery unit.

The Guard took part in the large parade to Exhibition Park in connection with the "Buy War Savings Stamps" campaign on July 7, 1940. There was also a demonstration day planned in the spring of 1941 but on May 10, an advertisement in the *Guelph Mercury* stated there would be no parade. This apparently was the end of the Guelph Civil Guard; there is no record of any ceremonial disbanding of the unit. On paper, the Warden of the County formally ended the Civil Guard on October 15, 1941.

As a sidebar, "F" Squadron, Canadian Legion of Frontiersmen was formed in Guelph as an auxiliary police force under Major Arthur Corke and began recruiting March 15, 1941. Basic training started in May 1942. There were 17 Frontiersmen in the unit when it was disbanded after the war. The cost of supplying a personal uniform was very high and few joined this prestige unit.

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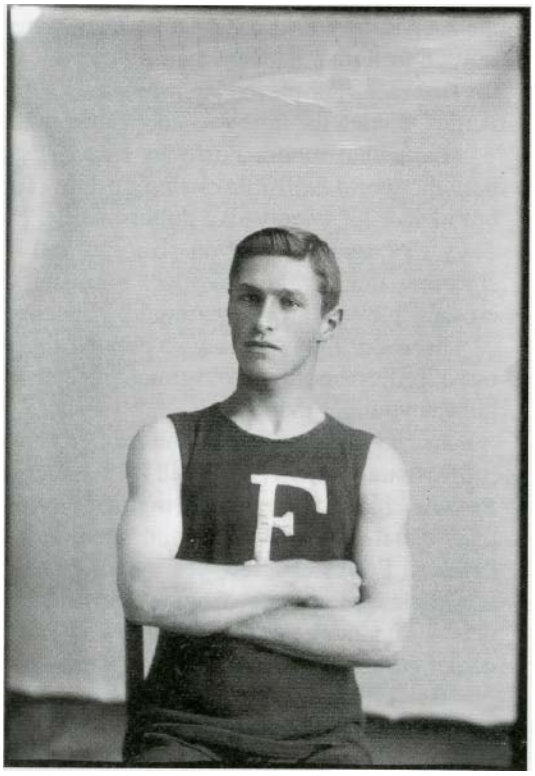
The Hopper:
World Champion Fergus Speed Skater

by Greg Oakes

In the 1860s skating became the rage in Fergus, the Grand River being a perfect setting. In 1879 a rink was constructed south of the river on Tower Street. For fifty years it hosted various skating competitions. Fergus produced several champions. Jack Black was the lead skater of the 1880s until John Graham eclipsed him in the 1890s. However the fastest man on skates to ever grace that rink was "The Hopper". At the turn of the century he bested several world champions.



J. Forrester, in uniform of the Fergus Thistles lacrosse team, Champions of the Northwestern District, 1893. Photo: WCMA ph 9761.

James John "Hopper" Forrester was born in Fergus in 1881. A cheerful lad, Jimmie developed an early athletic aptitude excelling in hockey and lacrosse. He speedily became an ace forward with the Fergus Thistles Lacrosse team. As a hockey player he exhibited tremendous speed. He also attended school in Fergus and learned the tin-smithing trade from Robert Kerr.

Jimmie grew up watching Jack Black pack the stands at the Fergus rink. Black beat all the locals with little effort. Occasionally, professionals from Toronto or Montreal would come to Fergus and Black beat them too. The

surviving newspapers from the 1880s record the surnames of other local speed skaters like Gale and Krausman of Elora, McCutcheon of Guelph, Phelan and Walker of Fergus, Couse of Belwood, and from Guelph - Brandon, and the two Bunyans - Matthew and Joseph. The standard race was five miles for a twenty-five dollar purse. The real money was earned office placing bets. John Graham had such a reputation for speed that in his prime his Toronto manager would advertise in the *New York Times* for challengers at $500.00 a side. He even boasted Graham could win a five-mile race alone against any five-man relay team competing with fresh legs for each mile.

By 1900 Forrester was competing in speed skating races all over the province. He had a reputation as a whirlwind and various contenders visited Fergus to challenge him. Dubbed "the Hopper" for his quick choppy stride, Forrester drew the crowds. On 7 February 1901 Nilsson of Sweden and Johnson of Minnesota were both beaten soundly by Forrester in Fergus. The two contenders billed themselves as world champions. They were supposed to race several heats but refused to further damage their reputations after losing so quickly to Forrester in the first race. The eleven lap race was described as the fastest mile ever skated in Fergus, though the time was not printed in the local papers.

Later that month Forrester raced Harley Davidson in Fergus. Davidson held the world half-mile championship. They raced half-mile heats, best three out of five for twenty-five dollars a side. Forrester won in three straight heats. They met again in Guelph, Toronto and Elora before embarking on a barn-storming tour of the province. Forrester usually won. Forrester worked the crowds in every arena, beating all challengers.

Forrester made skating so popular that John Graham and Jack Black came out of retirement for an old-timers race at one of his matches. Graham won, but he was younger than Black.

In those days, before the winter Olympics were well established most professional skaters would bill themselves as a world champion. The Harriston Review chided Forrester, saying that world champions were thicker this winter than usual and reminded him that their champion Joe Bradley had once defeated Forrester a few years earlier at the Arthur rink. They quipped that a world-champion skater from the equator might turn up in Palmerston. Bradley was wise enough not to challenge Forrester. The Fergus newspapers invited all comers to test their undefeated champ.

By 1905 speed skating was not as popular. Forrester moved to St. Catharines, lured by financial incentives. He became a star player on their senior lacrosse team and helped them win the Canadian championship that year. Clark and Co. of Niagara Falls employed him as a tinsmith and he played hockey for that city. He still performed in professional speed skating races.

At age 25, in the prime of his life and at the peak of his career, he died suddenly. He had not been feeling well and, sadly, he neglected medical care until he collapsed. He was treated at Fergus Hospital. An abscess in his appendix had perforated his bowel and the diagnosis was that it was too late to save his life; recovery was impossible.

Jimmie "Hopper" Forrester died 17 April 1906 and was interred in Belsyde Cemetery in Fergus, his legacy as a world champion speed skater intact.

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My Father's Barn

Castle Farm was our Nichol home.
The farmhouse was homey, huge and handsome,
But the barn had become dilapidated,
For crops and livestock was far outdated.
I was only a little lad
When William, my Old Dad,
Chose to erect a modern structure
The years of twenty-three was the dature.

Joseph Taylor was the stone-mason
Who moulded the firm foundation.
Peter Orme aided him in the erection,
Walter Hunt mixed the mortar to perfection.
Salem Longstreet was head framer
With auger, chisel, cant-hook and hammer.
His crew had Oakes and Freddy Baptie,
Locker, Leitch and Billy Elgie.

On "Raising Day" the sun shone brightly and clear,
As neighbours arrived from far and near.
Barnett, Barney, Bayne and Pinkney
Two of the Cooks, Campbell, Forrest and Kirby,
Rae and Knight, Smith MacDonald and McNee,
Elgie, Heffernan, Jackson and Joe McGee,
Tables set in the orchard shade, with victuals o'erladen,
Prepared by mistress, miss and merry maiden.

The "Barn Dance" was scheduled for July thirteen,
The cedar floor was softly scented, crisp and clean.
It was hey, diddle, diddle,
To the tunes of Dobberthein's bow and fiddle.
Aitchison strummed the strings of his banjo;
His sister, Louise, chorded the keys of the piano.
"Black Jack" Keating, the squares did call,
Chain away, chain away, chain away all.

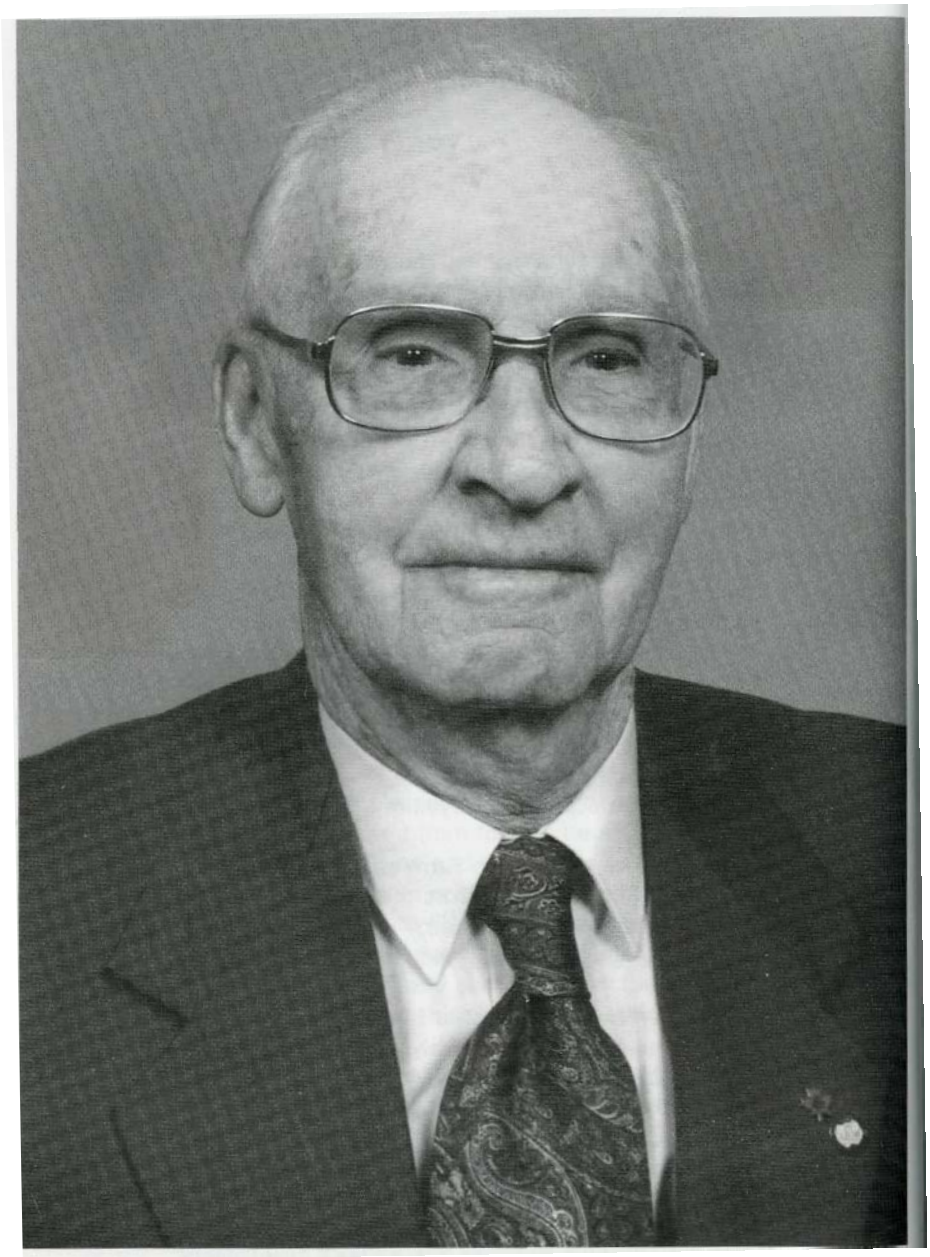
Red clover and timothy filled the west mow,
When gathered from the winding windrow.
The granary bins were piled high and neat
With barley, oats and fall wheat.
The stable included an equine niche,
For Polly, Donald, Doll and Dick,
Jack and Sandy, Flossie and Big Vick.
Hog pens for weaners and sows
Tandem stalls for milking cows,
Ranked and ranged in regular rows.

My Old Dad was extremely proud,
Expressed his feelings long and loud,
'Bout his barn of eighty by sixty feet.
Constructed by Taylor and Longstreet.
It stood for over seventy years,
Through joyous laughter and some tears,
Atop the sloping hillside,
Surveying the scenic countryside.

Year Sixty Five saw Castle Farm change hands,
Bought by Gerard Jansen from the Netherlands.
He was employed at Fiberglas.
His Black Angus won red ribbons in the cattle class.

In Nineteen Ninety Four, on a January morn,
From its hill-top home suddenly was shorn;
Stricken and sadly 'stroyed by a fatal fire,
This portly pillar lay pillaged in a paltry pyre.
The fury of the fanned flames, searing and savage,
The broadish beams and stalwart sills did rudely ravage.
My Father's Barn was futured to a fiery Fate,
The stone farmhouse, alone, mourning her manly mate.

Composed by David M. Beattie
February 01, 2000



David M. Beattie.

Photo courtesy of David M. Beattie.

A Warm and Sunny Place in Nichol Township:

The Experiences and Emotions in the Poetry of David Beattie

by lian goodall

A poet takes a subject and through a special arrangement of words and sound, gives it an artistic focus, often using rhyme and other devices to achieve a response in the reader. Yeats, Shakespeare, and other famed poets expound on the great themes of our morality and mortality, the themes of humankind's emotional and physical fragility. The work of the folk poet may not tackle such lofty topics. However, it fills an important place in our endeavour to enjoy and understand ourselves and each other.

By describing day-to-day happenings, these poems capture and often celebrate details that simply might otherwise escape record. Through their poetry, folk poets invite us to pull up a chair and sit near the poet in an intimate corner, so we can catch a glimpse of his or her world. It is a precious view that cannot be gained in any other way, the appreciation of lines that laud or gnash local life and its events. Folk poems are a special sharing of the emotions felt by poets about something that is important to them.

In the work of Wellington County folk poet, David Beattie, the reader soaks up the poet's offering - a warm and sunny view of our rural past. The forty-five poems Beattie has written are housed at the Wellington County Archives, printed in some Wellington County Historical Society newsletters, and framed on the walls of admirers' homes. The rhyming verses of four to eight lines, form poems one to three pages in length. Written from 1959 to 2005, the topics relate to growing up on a farm outside of Ennotville, Nichol Township: community history, social and sports events, education, and agriculture.

Beattie imparts his view of agricultural and community life from the era of his boyhood through to modern times. At the time of writing this essay, Beattie will soon be celebrating his ninety-first birthday. This means the perspective from which readers can benefit is based on nearly a century of keen-eyed observation! When researching this article, I visited Mr. Beattie in November 05. I found two of his well-known characteristics continue to dazzle and impress -- his charm and his phenomenal memory. Both attributes are luminously apparent in his poems that capture the happenings of day-to-day

life in Beattie's corner of the world some eight decades ago.

One of my favourite definitions of poetry is from a website called "about," | which delineates it as follows:

> Poetry is an imaginative awareness of experience expressed through meaning, sound, and rhythmic language choices so as to evoke an emotional response.[1]

This essay looks at the experiences and emotions in David Beattie's poetry.

David Beattie was born December 24, 1914 to William A. Beattie and Jean (Mutrie) Beattie. He was named "David" after his maternal grandfather, David Mutrie, and given the middle name McDonald for his grandmother Elizabeth Beattie's maiden name (she died before the family emigrated from Scotland in 1839). His parents farmed the acreage known as "Castle Farm" between Fergus and Guelph on the eighth concession of Nichol Township, Wellington County, worked by Beattie's grandparents after their immigration. Beattie lived happily at Castle Farm, building a modern house on an adjoining property in j 1965. In 1989, he moved to an apartment in Fergus, and in 1999 to Highland Manor, a retirement lodge in the same town.

Beattie began writing poetry in 1959. It was a specific event, the centennial j of his first school S.S. No. 4 Nichol, that prompted him to write a rhyming commemoration. Perhaps his farming duties prevented the muse from paying a visit over the next several years. In 1967, he wrote two poems: "The Eighth Concession Line" and "Mount Pleasant Methodist Church" (the place where he had attended Sunday School).[2] In the late 1960s and through the 1970s, Beattie penned several poems related to topics that provided the bulk of material for the rest of his work - farm life. "Threshing Day" came in 1968, "The Auction Sale" in 1970 and "Treasured Memories" in 1976.

A few poems and tributes followed in the 1980s, but, during this time I another sort of writing occupied Beattie. His great knowledge of local history and genealogy, aided by his remarkable memory, prompted him to help several people with their family histories. He also put his interest in the past to commendable use by compiling histories: *S.S. No. 4*, *a* pamphlet about the school; *Pillars and Patches Along the Way: A History of Nichol Township,* a project commissioned by Nichol Township and published in 1984; and *Bits and Batches* a self-published spiral-bound booklet full of wonderful photographs and details about Beattie's childhood, created in 1997. Poetry continued and took on a new pace in 2000. Before this time, Beattie had written thirteen poems. Between 2000 and 2005 he made more than thirty rhyme creations.

Beattie never submitted his work anywhere for publication, so it does not seem that he hoped to become a "professional" poet. Of his poetic work, Beattie says simply that the poems are not "controversial, they are just how I feel." Beattie seems aware that his is the personal voice of the folk poet. Indeed, this is the voice he claims in his prose too, as he expresses in *Bits and Batches:*

> May the contents of this publication flavoured by the touch of the folksy feelings of the writer provide interesting and informative reading for present and future generations.

He echoes his eagerness to share his knowledge in his poem "Folksy Facts and Friendly Ways" (2001). His opening appeal to the reader states:

> Hope you have time to linger and listen 'Cause
> my mind is a mirror and all aglisten Of folksy
> facts and friendly figures to equate From long-
> gone past to render and relate.

Something urged Beattie to sit down and put his feelings on paper as poems. Every so often, Beattie says "I just get thinking," and then the words start coming. In "two, three, four days, or maybe a week," he has a poem, one that he might share with friends. The need to express ourselves is one most of us share. But why would Beattie often choose poetry over prose, a form he also uses?

Beattie may have preferred poetry for several reasons including the way in which it engages emotions through the freedom of word movement it allows the poet. He may have found that poetry was in some ways a more fun medium than prose, the "imaginative" kind of awareness mentioned in our definition. He could develop, for one thing, a bouncing use of alliteration, a device that does not lend itself as well to linear prose.

Alliteration is the tool that helps shape the upbeat tone of Beattie's poems. Repetition of the first consonant gives the reader the feeling of almost skipping along with the words. In his first poems, Beattie uses it almost shyly. In 1967, as he sets the scene for the families on the "Eighth Concession Line" he describes the "ribboned route," one that unfolds with "a wordless welcome to impart." In the other 1967 offering, "Mount Pleasant Methodist Church," the building "a sacred sentinel stood, sublimely tranquil, A beckoning beacon to the soul of man."

After 2000, it is clear that the more the poet wrote, the more joyously he explored the medium. One of my favourite examples of Beattie's use of alliteration comes from a poem entitled "Magic Memories" (2001).

> The ringing rhyme of the sleigh-bell's chime
> Jouncing a joyous jangle in the winter-time Bouncing
> and bounding, horses pacing and prancing Conveying
> the crowd to go drinking and dancing.

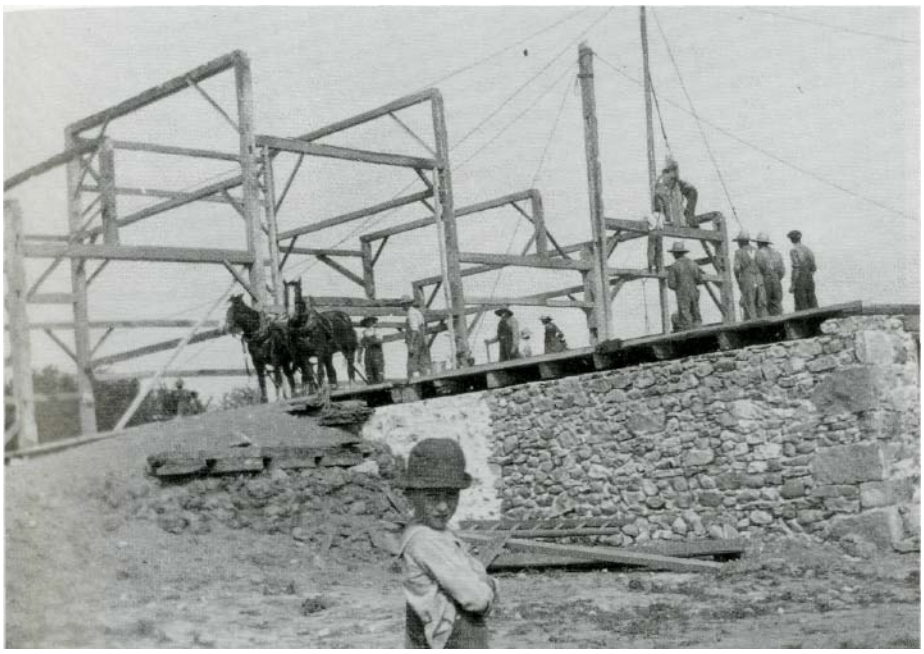
It's hard for a reader not to smile when caught up in the movement of such jolly lines.

Beattie traces his awareness of poetic forms to material from his school

days. He was from a literate home and community. He remembers reading newspapers at home, and gobbling up such titles at the Ennotville Library as *Baseball Joe Matson*, a title the baseball-crazed boy had half read before he got home. His family's schoolbooks, and a reproduction copy of his early primer still sit on Beattie's book shelves at Highland Manor. As an adult, the primer 'returned' to him. A reprinted copy appeared in a local store, which Beattie purchased (and subsequently many of his friends did too). The "Spider and the Fly" is one of the simple poems in this primer, poems that undoubtedly were memorized and never forgotten by Beattie and his schoolmates. At highschool, he was drawn to "anything literary" and this is where tools, such as alliteration, were more formally introduced. Alliteration, Beattie admits, was and is one of his favourite poetic tools, and one that he skillfully developed the more poems I he wrote.

Poetry as a medium may have given Beattie a way of evoking a more satisfying 'emotional response' from his readers, and perhaps even himself, than prose. Narrowing in on a particular topic in a poem, the poet is pleasantly tasked with creating a word picture of emotion. In Beattie's case, the 'feel good,' positive attitude of the poems is one of the body of work's delightful and distinctive features. Beattie wrote about a softball team he helped coach for a number of years in "Our Softball Team" (1969). When he writes about the 1971 season of the Ponsonby Girls softball team, the fact that the girls lost the championship seems buried in the other lines. It may even come as a surprise to the reader who might ask "Did I read that right?" "Ponsonby Junior Girls 1971" applauds many of the team members' individual strengths, recounts a corn roast and toasts the season. The fact that they were "trounced" right "good and sound" is mentioned, but it hardly seems important. Beattie sees the summer as a "season none will soon forget, for the fun we had and the people we met, For our sporting manners plaudits did get, courageous actions we'll never regret." No wonder the positive poet admits that since that time, some of] the girls have let him know he inspired them to make certain life-affirming choices.

The Ponsonby Junior Girls poems are part of a minority of works that talk about events off the farm. Beattie wrote one poem about "The Ennotville Public Library" (2000) and the social events - from dances to elections - that occurred there. "The First Sight of Santa" (2005) takes place at church,[3] and "School Days" (2003) was another poem set at Nichol No. 4 schoolhouse, which was nestled on a corner of land off Castle Farm. "A Euchre Epilogue" (2001) unfolds at the site of a euchre club's games at the former weigh station in Fergus. The Ennotville Library and Santa poems excepted, these verses contain in their rhyming lines between twenty-four and ninety-four names of participants! It is amazing that Beattie can list the names of so many of his euchre-playing adult friends, let alone those of his schoolmates from dozens of years before. Undoubtedly, giving the names is intended to honour the people involved and the spirit of camaraderie that Beattie most certainly felt when he was a part of these groups.[4]



Father's barn; in the foreground, young Reg Forest. Photo courtesy of David M. Beattie.

The rest of the poems in the Beattie collection commemorate farm life, and in almost every instance, life at Castle Farm: the seasons as Beattie experienced them there, the furniture he remembers (a clock from Scotland and a captain's chair), the many creatures and happenings on the farm. Some of these poems involve an event attended by a number of other people. Beattie has a very humorous account of a country auction, "The Auction Sale" (January 1970). "My Father's Barn" (February 2000) captures the excitement of building a new barn, and "Threshing Day" (1968) is about the day the threshing crew came.

These poems also show Beattie's incredible memory when recounting his experiences as a child on the farm. With an observant eye, he describes the role of the individuals and their special characteristics. In "Threshing Day" we read about Andy, the thresher and the Beattie family's dog:

> With shoulders stooped and leathery skin. His
> jaws yellow with tobacco stain. His greasy
> garments black as sin.
>
> With grimy hand, seated on an upturned pail,
> He stroked Bowser's head with gentleness:
> Whose laughing tongue and wagging tail,
> Accepted his kindly pal with friendliness.

Janet and David Seattle with Bowser.

Photo courtesy of David M. Beattie.

Beattie is able to recapture the perspective of a young boy and recount the details as he would have seen them, right down to the way that Bowser was treated. The poet also notes how the cat accepted the whole threshing activity hustle and bustle, "quietly crouching, ears alerted."

These poems take the creator and the reader to a time that Beattie remembers as a gentle one. There is no doubt that Beattie appreciated growing up in a rural setting, a fact he acknowledges today. He avows he "was always thankful that I was raised in the country." Many of his poems talk about the quiet times he enjoyed as a young boy walking with Bowser. His autobiography notes indicate that young Beattie was at first an extraordinarily shy lad, who would hide when visitors came, unless it was time for a meal. It seenis the! space given to solitude and reflection that living in the country afforded him, suited Beattie quite well.

"Treasured Memories" 1976 explains how "In my boyhood days, I loved to wander... With Bowser, a faithful hunting hound." In this poem the two search for animal tracks, and Beattie remembers boiling sap with a friend, fishing, swimming, playing hockey with a "horse bun" and other activities' Again, the details Beattie relates are impressive. The poet recalls doing things that most of us might remember - having fun with canine and human friends. But he is able to go much, much more deeply into his memory and record the shades and tones of the day that make it come alive for the contemporary reader. In "Treasured Memories" Beattie recalls the flowers - buttercups; the I

plants - Jack-in-the-Pulpit; the trees - balsam; the birds - blue jays, crows, robins, swallows and a quail; the mammals - fox, mink, muskrat, woodchuck, squirrel, raccoon, chipmunk and skunk; and even the types of fish, mollusks and amphibians - suckers, clams and tree frogs. All these sights were absorbed by the eyes of one little boy out on his walks in Nichol Township in the 1920s. This is one of the gifts that Beattie as a folk poet gives us. He is able to recreate 'the world of small,' the tiny details of the natural world of yesteryear.

The degree of detail Beattie focussed in on expanded in his later poems. His poems take on very defined subjects: turnips, tomatoes ("A Tomato Tribute" 2003), berries ("Berries Abounding" 2003) or apples. "The Old Apple Orchard"(1989) mentions the Astrachan apple, along with eight other types. It becomes the topic of a single poem, "The Astrachan Apple" in 2003. "Talking of Turnips" (2000) I might dare to say is one of the only, if not the only poem that lauds this vegetable. Beattie talks of the turnip's whole life cycle. First his father prepared the field, "As an anxious kildeer pleaded a poignant protest; Protecting her speckled eggs in her new and naked nest." Then in June, came drilling and seeding "Purple King" or "Giant Swede." This was followed by hoeing, an activity that caused aches and thirstiness, the latter slaked by a drink charmingly described as "Adam's ale." Topping and trimming happened in the fall, the cycle ending with the horses hauling in the turnips. The harvest was then used primarily for cattle food, but also for human consumption accompanied, ironically, by roast beef.

Our artist seems to have an exceptionally bountiful memory and the particulars he recalls are treasures for today's reader. There is, of course, a lot of value for the researcher in such details. Through Beattie's poetry, one will be able to know the natural and agricultural environment, right down to the speckles on the birds' eggs. But are the poems an accurate view of life in Nichol Township? For any personal view, the reader has to take into account the fact that the view is just that - personal. While one cannot dispute the picture painted as being emotionally true for the artist, the historian wonders if the experiences are valid for factual research.

Is the sun shining just a little too brightly in Beattie's poetic world? Even the poem "Depression Days" (2000) espouses that "Residing on the rural routes was a blessing, For our sons of the soil twas tranquil and unstressing." With the help of neighbours and food grown from the land, the crisis was passed quite easily on the Eighth Concession, it seems from Beattie's point of view. World War One is mentioned in his *Bits and Batches* memoir, but not World War Two. War is not a topic Beattie chooses to enshrine poetically.

It is possible that the poet is uninterested in commemorating any unpleasant parts of the past. The emotional response that the poet chooses to evoke is nostalgia, which *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* describes, in part, as "a wistful memory of an earlier time." Certainly, the past outshines today in oeattie's opinion. In our interview he bemoaned the fact that modern times compromised one's privacy, as testified by the amount of mail addressed to him asking for money. Beattie thinks that the rate of change has accelerated in

Tim, the cat.
Photo courtesy of
David M. Beattie.

today's world. He admitted that he is glad that to be "at this stage of life" and does not have to "battle with what's left."

I asked Beattie if he thought that a young person today could have the same sort of enjoyment that he had as a lad traipsing through the countryside with Bowser. Beattie was emphatic that this was not possible. For one thing, fanning has changed. Fanners today have to "keep their pencils sharp" Beattie noted, and it is very difficult to pass on farms due to costs. Specifically, his old farm j has changed. He used to know where "every clump of flowers was," but he I doubted that they would be there due to the fact that the current owners raise! deer. Still, he pondered that one never knows what might come back in spring.

In comparison to how he finds life at present, Beattie remembers his childhood as a fantastic time, one full of wonder and innocence. A reader might cynically question that Seattle's childhood could have been as idyllic as his poems portray. However, the photographs in *Bits and Batches* seem to support that indeed, the rural sunshine Beattie seeks to capture may have really existed at Castle Farm. The suntanned members of his family - sister Janet, young Beattie and his parents - beam from ear to ear in their casually-posed outdoor portraits. Even the famed Bowser and cat, Tim, would be smiling, if such a

thing was possible. Certainly, viewing the photographs, one understands why Beattie would seek to recapture the positive emotions of this period through poetry. There appears to be no reason to disbelieve that he grew up in a loving, healthy environment. Life on Castle Farm may have fostered an optimism and kindness that grew throughout his life, so that his graceful, gentlemanly ways earn Beattie respect and admiration in his senior years.

One sees little to contradict the views emphasized in poems such as the one Beattie considers his "climax" and warns might be his last poem. In July 2005, the poet remembered school, helpful neighbours, and wandering on trails "where a closeness to the Creator, peacefully pervades." His father tended the crops, his mother baked, and his sister, dressed in a red velvet frock, played with her doll. The title of that poem is "Boyhood Bliss Amid Country Charm." The researcher will have to be content to consider that the elated emotional tone of the poems probably reflects the life Beattie chooses to remember, but what he chooses to remember, he remembers well. We might accept this sunny view, with its accurately-recalled details of a time of horses and steam engines, as this folk poet's gift to future generations of Wellington County residents.

For myself, I gained a new look at some of the people I grew up with. The appreciation Beattie shows for the girls of the 1971 Ponsonby softball team made me consider different facets of my schoolmates. One spunky player to Beattie was "a trier," another "has an arm like a whip," a third "is a potent home-run whacker." Beattie's poem gave me an insight into something that was probably very important in the girls' lives, and something I had never given a thought about before. Connecting with the poems on a personal level is also meaningful for Beattie's friends, some of whom cry when they read his lines.

One might read Beattie's poems to research topics related to general rural life, such as the games played or the books read in a one-room schoolhouse. Genealogists or interested family members might wish to find out more about their relatives. Whatever the reason for which one seeks the poetry out, in reading the body of Beattie's poems the reader can feel grateful that Beattie's gift is such an affirming one, that the poems give readers a feeling of well-being. I am delighted that someone has taken the time to create a poem about one of my favourite flowers, the often overlooked pansy. Beattie's motivation for writing the tribute was nothing more than the fact that he liked "the way they look at you."

> **Portrait of a Pansy** (2001) The polite pansy prospers in a secluded station And much prefers a sheltered location. Beauteous blooms, yawning and yellow Blithesome browns blinking mutely and mellow. Vibrant varieties, shy shine an artful allure. White blossoms are passive and pure; Azure and royal are subtle shades of blue Exotic elegance of a heavenly hue.

The pansy's earnest eyes exude a cheerful charm
From friendly faces focus, wistful and warm A
magnificent mixture mirrors a colourful creation Of
tasteful tones worthy of adoration and admiration The
revered rose reigns glorious and glamourous The
tulip and the violet grow grand and gracious But the
petite pansy is attractive and appealing To my
helpless heart so softly stealing.

With beauty in today's poems all but trampled by fast-paced, urgent themes, it is worth taking the time to bask in the sunny corner of folk poet David Beattie.

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http://contemporarylit.about.eom/cs/literaryterms/g/poetry.htm

Interviews with David M. Beattie by lian goodall, November 16 (telephone), November 19 (Fergus), 2005.

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, ed. Katherine Barber (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998).

ENDNOTES:

1. "about" visited December 9, 2005, http://contemporarylit.about.eom/cs/literaryterms/g/poetry.htm.
2. Beattie's grandparents were charter members of what is today Melville United Church in Fergus, and the family attended that church. However, he also went to Sunday School nearer his home at Mount Pleasant Methodist Church.
3. Curiously Beattie does not reveal in the poem a fact that he noted in the interview — Santa was played by a girl that year!
4. Beattie was also a proud member of the Masons, which he joined in 1945.

Going to Town: A Conversation with Mrs. Gordon Cleghorn, Mr. Donald Stewart and Mr. Abe McComb

organized in 1981 by Alvin and Sheila Koop

Alvin Koop: What we wish to do this afternoon is explore the meaning and potential uses of oral history and we would like to do this in a very direct and entertaining way. Before I introduce our participants, I would like to share with you a few thoughts on oral history and also give you some background on the project that Sheila and I have been involved in for the last three years in Wellington County.

First and foremost, oral history is storytelling. It is storytelling that has been captured and preserved on tape. The story-teller's offerings can be grouped in two main categories; those of oral tradition and those of oral testimony. The former stories usually have been handed down from one generation to the next within the family circle and may include ballads, supernatural tales, humorous anecdotes, tall tales and yarns, and in the case of this afternoon, personal accounts of earlier times. Even though historical truth is contained in many of these, historians generally leave this category to the folklorists. Oral testimony on the other hand is made up of recollections, descriptions and impressions from the direct experience of the narrator or interviewee. In the last ten or fifteen years this branch of storytelling has been of particular interest to historical societies, various archives, and of course we have seen it on the bookstands a lot more with the works of Barry Broadfoot, Studs Turkel in the United States, and Ronald Blythe with his very interesting study of the English village of Akenfield.

According to Ernest J. Dick, the former Head of the Sound Archives of the Public Archives of Canada, oral testimony "can fill gaps in traditional documentation, capture the flavour of a personality, and replace the traditional function of the diary and personal forms of correspondence." Oral testimony provides rich evidence for people who are interested in history but like more than the "bare bones" and want to see some personality in the past.

Once oral testimony or tradition has been recorded, there are a large variety of uses to which it can be put. You may have noticed several plays and films whose scripts have been created through interviewing people who have had direct experience with the subject matter. This has happened in a number of the Toronto theatre groups and also is very popular in St. John's, Newfoundland, now. Folk festival workshops have been including more and more storytellers along with their singers and dancers and other forms of entertainment. Oral history is also being employed in Museums and Historical Sites where the recorded voices of people who can remember the earlier times are used to describe a particular display or a certain tool - how it was used and perhaps a reminiscence or two of experiences involving the artifact. Oral history can be presented "live", as we will be doing this afternoon; it can serve as a valuable learning aid in classrooms, or the information can be transcribed to form the basis of a book. This final option is the one we chose in our project.

Our book *[Older Voices Among Us]* relies upon both oral tradition and oral testimony. The first of the two parts of the book is entitled "I've Heard Tell"; it consists of stories which were handed down in the family, maybe about how grandfather cleared the land or how he first chose his farm site. The second part, "I mind the time", contains the direct recollections of the people whom we interviewed. In addition to the interviews, we also made use of the early essay collection that was compiled by the Wellington County Historical Research Society. Some essays dated back to the 1920s and were a very valuable source. We relied on the Historical Research Society for a great deal of support during the project and shared their sense of urgency in wanting to record these memories on tape. We were also concerned that children and young people today have less and less contact with their own grandparents, and with older folks in general. As for our approach, our process of pre-interviewing and screening before we actually did taped interviews is described in the preface to our book. You can leaf through that later at your leisure. Right now, let's proceed with our afternoon of reminiscing on "Going To Town." Sheila, will you take over at this point?

Sheila Koop: Well, I'd like to introduce the people who have come out to join us this afternoon: Mr. Donald Stewart from Puslinch; Mr. Abe McComb from, originally Minto Township, but he's now living in Elora; and Mrs. Gordon Cleghorn who lives in Guelph.

Mrs. Cleghorn, I want to try and relax things a bit, I want to quote you. I was talking to Mrs. Cleghorn on the phone a few days ago about what we were going to do this afternoon and she said to me, "Well, I was telling my daughter the other day, if only my legs were in as good shape as my tongue I'd be in great form." So, on that note, just to put things in context I'm going to ask the embarrassing question of Mrs. Cleghorn, could you tell us when you were born and describe a little bit about that?

Mrs. Cleghorn: I was born on the 14th of December in 1897 and I've always

Bill and Lynn Crow presenting the Gladwin Crow Memorial Trophy to Donald A. Stewart for the champion market barrow at the 1981 Canadian National Exhibition. Photo courtesy of Lynn Crow.

Flora Cleghorn, 1986. Photo: WCMA ph 7657.

been told that that day the roads were axle deep in mud and my father had to go from our home, which is just to the left side of Willow Road, past the Hanlon Expressway out to Ospringe, and if you can imagine what that was like with a horse and buggy in those days to travel that distance (12-15 miles) to get the practical nurse that was to look after my mother.

Sheila Koop: Quite something! And Mr. McComb, I think you go back even a little further than that?

Mr. McComb: That's right. Well, I was born September the 27th in the year 1889, near Palmerston. I was one of what they call the Wallace lambs. And I spent just the first three or four years of my life there and I moved out into Minto Township in the spring of 1893.1 spent 73 years on the same place, and lived in the same house.

Sheila Koop: Now that's quite a testimony these days. And Mr. Stewart?

Mr. Stewart: Well, I was born 19th of March 1903 on Lot 20, Puslinch Township and I've been there all my life, ever since, and I have enjoyed a good life. I'm gettin', you'll have to excuse me ladies and gentlemen, I'm a little bit deaf, but don't say nothin' against me - I'll hear that right away! I've been there all my life, I'm a third generation on the farm, they settled there in 1839 and our house was built, had a log house, main house now is a big stone house they built in 1874 and as I said I'm a third generation and I'm the last. I have nothing, nobody to put it onto, unless a cousin or something and I'd like to keep it in the name.

Sheila Koop: Well, we are very glad we are getting some of your recollections and memories. Do you have a memory of the first time that you were taken into town?

Mr. Stewart: Well, I can't say it was the first time or not, but we used to, we were around twelve miles or a little better out straight south of Guelph here and it used to be a day's journey, in and out and by the time you're done your shopping and that. Yes, I can remember coming in with my father and you'd meet some of the old people on the road. He knew most everybody. He was in the Council one time. He was warden in 1899 and he knew a lot of the people and I'd be awful tired. I don't know there's anything further I could say; it was all horse and buggy in those days.

Sheila Koop: I think, Mrs. Cleghorn, you were mentioning to me that it wasn't just an everyday thing to sort of trip into town to do shopping?

Mrs. Cleghorn: Oh no, when you were taken to town it was because you needed new shoes or a coat or something else that it was very necessary that you should be there, and of course in those days my father and mother going to town it was no problem because my aunt and my grandmother lived in the front of the house and my sister and I had built-in babysitters of course. Babysitters were an unheard-of thing in those days.

Sheila Koop: Mr. McComb, can you think of some of the trips your parents would have made into town and why they would have gone at all?

Mr. McComb: Well, I think maybe I could. I can remember my father and mother going into town when I was pretty small. My father had an aunt that lived clear across the road from us and they used to leave me in with her while they'd go to town and I can remember this old aunt doing certain things before I was old enough to talk about it. And my mother said it was about six months after that when I told her what old Aunt Biddy was doing. And my mother wouldn't believe it, she thought I was making it up so she went and she asked Aunt Biddy. She said it was right, so I remember quite awhile back because I wasn't able to talk yet and I'm 92 years old now.

Sheila Koop: Would it have been a weekly occurrence that your parents would have gone into town do you think?

Mr. McComb: Oh, it could be ... it might not be ... it was when it was convenient, mostly. It wasn't so easy to go to town in them days as it is nowadays.

Sheila Koop: You had to plan for it?

Mr. McComb: Yeah.

Sheila Koop: Mr. Stewart, can you remember seeing a change over time, as a young boy and as you got older, in how much your family did use the town? Did it become more important to you in your life? Did the trips become more frequent?

Mr. Stewart: Well, we used to come to town, not too often, but I recall about this time (late October) after we threshed, my father would take a load of wheat into Goldie's (Mill) in Guelph here and get about four or five hundred flour, maybe a hundred or two of sugar and you didn't forget oatmeal. And we came home with that. Well, sometimes you'd get a barrel of Labrador herring. The old Scotchmen liked fish, you know. We didn't care, the roads were bad, we didn't care whether we got out before spring or not because my mother made bread, we had pork and some beef rings sometimes. We'd be closed in for quite some time the way the roads were then, they were just paths and I can recall going through the fields different winters from one concession to the other.

Sheila Koop: Mrs. Cleghorn, what about when cars started being used?

Mrs. Cleghorn: Oh, the cars were a nightmare to country people driving horses. I can remember very well going down to Hespeler. My mother's youngest brother was a dentist in Hespeler and we used to go down there to have our teeth attended to, and this particular time we met a car. I could show you the place on Cooper Street in Hespeler where we met that car and my father got out and took the horse by the head, the horse was terrified. And I think my mother was just as terrified as the horse!

Sheila Koop: What did Hespeler look like then?

Mrs. Cleghorn: Oh, Hespeler was just a small town but a very industrious place, because they had the woollen mill there, Forbes Woollen Mill. That was most important, and I always remember when the noon whistle blew at the mill, the streets were just filled with people going home from the mill for their lunch and if my uncle was on the street he spoke to every person he met. I don't know whether he could name them all or not but he seemed to know them all. He was a dentist there for 54 years.

Sheila Koop: Were you given some sort of a treat after you went to the dentist?

Mrs. Cleghorn: Oh, mercy no, we were never given treats for things like that! We just DID it!

Sheila Koop: When you were first married and setting up your own farm, did you depend upon a lot of services from town? Did you have to get your farm implements repaired in town?

Mr. McComb: Oh, to a large extent, but we didn't have near the farm equipment that they have nowadays, for to get repaired. It was all horses and horse machinery at that time, when I first started.

Sheila Koop: Did you have to take your horses into the blacksmith for shoeing then?

Mr. McComb: Oh, sure we did.

Sheila Koop: To Palmerston? Did you have to go as far as Palmerston?

Mr. McComb: Well, not always, sometimes there was a blacksmith shop at Teviotdale, a mile and a half down the road, and we often got them shod there. Well, there was a blacksmith shop and a wagon- maker's shop. There was a General Store and a post office, doctor's shop/office and hotel, the church, Forester's Hall. Teviotdale was a thriving place at that time.

Sheila Koop: What sort of activities were there, did you go to the church at Teviotdale?

Mr. McComb: Oh yes.

Sheila Koop: And what kind of activities other than Sunday service would have been held there?

Mr. McComb: Well, often through the summer, maybe there was a garden party held at somebody's home, which was sometimes our place and, coming on Christmas time, the young people of the church always prepared and got a Christmas programme ready for an entertain- ment and sometimes there was a little too much nonsense worked in at the practices and we didn't always get our piece up, just quite as good as we should have!

Sheila Koop: Were you involved in Christmas concerts?

Mr. McComb: Oh yes.

Sheila Koop: What did you do?

Mr. McComb: Mostly made a goose of myself!

Sheila Koop: What were you doing, trying to sing or...?

Mr. McComb: No, I never could sing, but I always could make fun of somebody else.

Sheila Koop: Mr. Stewart, what about you - you used mainly Guelph and Hespeler?

Mr. Stewart: What about the question?

Sheila Koop: The towns that you used mostly were Guelph and Hespeler?

Mr. Stewart: And Gait. Guelph and Gait and some Hespeler. Not so much Hespeler. We mostly came to Guelph and done our shoppin' there. We didn't get the telephone, we got it in 1913 the telephone down there. Guelph was our central, still is.

Sheila Koop: Did you ever go on outings to go to a restaurant in Guelph or for entertainment?

Mr. Stewart: Not too much, didn't have the money to do it. Our settlement was Highland Scots people, Crieff was the name of the place, it's died out a number of years since rural mail got in but I was just telling some of the people here today, when Puslinch was settled the Scotsmen made for the hills. The Englishmen got the good land, the Irishmen had to take what was left! First generation made money, the second saved it and now we're spending it, just as sure as I'm sitting here! Yes, Highland Scots. But there's a very few of the old, I think there's just three families that got their land from the Crown on about twelve miles on our concession -just three families that came from father to son to grandson and it won't be long till there's none. There's a lot of new people coming in. Quite a lot of the Hollanders coming in there and, well, there's very few of the old families left. There was an awful lot of Stewarts, a lot of McPhersons and a lot of MacDonalds and they had nicknames for them, you see. There was Black Jim McPherson, Jimmy Sandy McPherson and Angry John McPherson. They went by their father's name.

Sheila Koop: What was Crieff like? How many stores?

Mr. Stewart: Well, I heard my father say there'd be a hundred men there at some time on the go. But when I was there, there was a church and four or five houses, that's all. There was a store there and our post office was there. I can recall going down for the mail from school. It came in twice a week, and then it came in every day to Crieff and us school kids would get the mail all on our own and deliver it on the way home, but Colonel Maclean, there was a manse there, he was born there and they gave it to him. His father and mother was

buried there in the churchyard and he put a stone fence around and they donated him with the old manse which was fallen down and he restored it and bought 300 acres besides so I suppose some of you have heard of the retreat there, the Presbyterian Church has a retreat. I suppose some of you have been down there probably. It's a nice spot and Reverend Bob Spencer, he is the fellow who is looking after it.... There's 300 acres and a lot of his land is reforested, but it is a very nice spot if you ever go down there.

Sheila Koop: Mrs. Cleghorn, you have a different perspective, maybe in terms of schooling because of your experience at the Consolidated School. Could you describe how that happened?

Mrs. Cleghorn: I wonder how many of you know that the MacDonald Consolidated School was where the MacDonald Stewart Art Centre is now? Sir William MacDonald, a way back in the early 1900s, had a dream that he wanted the rural children to have as good an opportunity at education as the city children and he wanted the children from, I think, six sections. There was No. 1, York Road, Guelph Township, and No 2 and No. 4, the section where I was born, and No.6 and No. 7 and then the section at Arkell. They came to the Consolidated School, brought with horse-drawn vans and someone who interviewed me about my going to the Consolidated School said Sir William MacDonald was sixty years ahead of his time because now the children are taken to school in motorized vehicles to a central school. When the Consolidated School started it was to be an experiment for three years. The schools in each section would just be closed, left with all their equipment, and the children would be brought with horse- drawn vans to the Consolidated. And then at the end of three years they would vote in each school section as to whether they would stay in the Consolidated School or return to their own school.

Now, a lot of the people felt, people who lived the greatest distance from the school, their children had to be picked up so early in the morning that they didn't like that and they felt that it would be much better for them to go back to their own school. Now our school section voted out by one vote. And my father was one of the trustees in the No. 4 section and as a result was on the Board at the Consolidated School and he and my mother were so pleased with the way my sister and I got along that they decided that we were going to continue to go to the Consolidated School. The Consolidated School was opened on the first of October of 1904 and I started school in the spring of 1905. In those days the children, the beginners as a rule, started after Easter. They didn't have a kindergarten at all, you were into the first grade and we went to the Consolidated School. Perhaps I should tell you about the van drivers. The van drivers each supplied their own team of horses. There were two sizes of vans and I can't tell you how many children would be transported in the smaller one and how many in the larger van but I do know that the driver of the smaller van got two dollars and a half per day for his self and his team

and the driver of the bigger van got three dollars a day and they stayed around the MacDonald Consolidated School all day.

Now, in the summertime the men, these would be farmers or farmers' sons, they got work in the experimental plot at the O.A.C. and in the winter time, I don't know what they did from nine o'clock in the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon. One thing I do know, Tom McCrae was one of the van drivers. He was a cousin, and I know that he had an opportunity to learn some carpentry work in the manual training room at the Consolidated School and I remember distinctly one year Tom came to our home and wanted to know did Mother and Aunties have anything in the line of old copper boilers or kettles with copper bottoms. Because he wanted copper and he used this copper to make, I remember, a small plate that he made with a cut-out design around the outside of it and, I remember, a whisk holder and he made the back out of wood and stained it and then the front. I don't know how many of you know what a whisk holder is? Every home had a whisk in the long ago days. You didn't have clothes brushes like they do now and the front was a band of copper with a design cut out in it. And I've got that yet and this is what the van drivers did in the winter time.

They got work in the manual training room and I have my recipe book yet, when I started to take domestic science, my first domestic science lesson was the second of September of 1908 and the first thing we learned to make was a cream sauce. The second thing was cobbled apples and we had snow apples that we cooked in a light syrup and you know snow apples to most people is something they know nothing about, but snow apples were very popular at that time.

Sheila Koop: Did those van drivers pick you up at the farm gate?

Mrs. Cleghorn: Not always at the farm gate. And of course that was something else to disturb people, some objected to their children having to walk so far, more than a certain distance to be picked up by the van. Just the way they do now with the school buses and I was going to tell you too, about the school buses. Nowadays they have the very same objection to the children being picked up so early in the morning. Think when that mother has to get up to have that child ready to be picked up at 7:25 in the morning.

Sheila Koop: Well, how did you get to school, Mr. McComb?

Mr. McComb: Our Shanks' ponies! Nobody ever thought of driving us to school in our day.

Sheila Koop: And how did it go in the winter?

Mr. McComb: Just the same. It didn't matter how cold or how stormy it was or any thin' else. For one thing, my school days didn't last long. I never got to school after I was twelve years of age so you know I haven't got very much education to brag about.

Sheila Koop: But tell us what you were doing if you weren't at school?

Mr. McComb: Well, I would stay at home and work, trying to earn a living. When I think today of the difference in the times and the conditions and the prices that people got then and how they are today. We're living in a different world, that's just about a fact. I can remember when my mother and not only my mother, but everybody else's people at that time, we could grow our farm produce, butter and eggs and poultry and meats and everything else, take it into the store and deal out what you wanted and if you had a bit over they wouldn't give you a cent of money. Not a bit.

They'd give you a due bill, what the store people called a due bill, for that same amount and you could deal it out some other time. But in the meantime, sometimes it had amounted to quite a little bit, at least in those days. Now, I've seen my mother have fifty sixty or maybe seventy dollars worth of due bills on some stores, but she couldn't get any money. She couldn't go to any other store to buy anything because she had no money. That had to be dealt with at that store and the storekeeper set the price both comin' and goin'. So that's the way we got along without money. So there's a lot of things I could tell, but it would take too much time.

Alvin Koop: Did any of you ever go into town for fun? For entertainment? Or was that done elsewhere?

Mr. McComb: Not very much, no.

Alvin Koop: How about the Fair, Mr. Stewart, did you ever come into the Guelph Fair?

Mr. Stewart: Oh yes, I came into the Winter Fair, but other than that never went to a movie until I was up in years and I haven't went since!

Mr. McComb: Well, one thing, they didn't have very many movies to go to in my days but if we did go to something it didn't cost the way it does today.

Mr. Stewart: No, there was garden parties and dances.

Alvin Koop: In the homes?

Mr. Stewart: Yes, fortunately every home had a dance in the winter time, once a week or so, and we had to make our own entertainment. Go to the neighbours a bunch, and play cards or something like that.

Mrs. Cleghorn: And they didn't have orchestras like they do to dance to now.

Mr .Stewart: Oh no, it was a fellow got up on the stool or on the table with a fiddle, violin, maybe somebody on the piano.

Sheila Koop: Did they not have dances at the town hall?

Mr. Stewart: There was the odd one, yes, not too many, maybe New Year's dance or something like that. There was more house dances, more home

parties, just the immediate district you know. They were good times.

Sheila Koop: Did you ever have a Box Social?

Mr. Stewart: Oh yes, there was the odd Box Social, particularly in the First War, to raise money for the Red Cross and that. There were a lot of Box Socials then. That's when they came in, around 1914, '15, 16.

Sheila Koop: Well, what happened, why was it called a Box Social?

Mr. Stewart: Well, the girls would take a box and have a lot of goodies in it, sandwiches and one thing or another and put it up by auction and sell it and some of the fellows would bid the boxes up if they knew this fellow's girl had the box, they'd bid them up. They were up three or four dollars some of them.

Mr. McComb: They always decorated the boxes too.

Mr. Stewart: Oh yes! But if a fellow had bidden on his girl's box and the other fellas knew it boy, they'd bid him up. Made him pay for it pretty sweet sometimes!

Sheila Koop: Are there any recollections of pedlars coming around from the towns, into the countryside?

Mrs. Cleghorn: Yes, there've been pedlars and another thing that the country people were bothered with was tramps and I can remember after I was married somebody coming around the corner of the house and nearly scared me to death. You fed them, you didn't as a rule ask them into your house, you fed them on the veranda.

Sheila Koop: Weren't you talking about the Rawleigh's before?

Mrs. Cleghorn: Oh, the Rawleigh man and the Watkins man, they made their rounds regularly and I know that the Rawleigh man always seemed to arrive at our place at noon time and stayed for a meal and you got something in the way of Rawleigh products but I use Rawleigh products and Watkins products to this day. I was telling Mrs. Koop, I have vanilla and lemon and maple flavouring and spices that I have got from the Rawleigh and the Watkins man. The products are very similar.

Mr. McComb: And I might tell you just a little story about the *Family Herald* man. In the Depression times when we had no money, that's just about all you could say, we were losing money every day and an agent come along and wanted a subscription for the Herald - to renew our subscription. Well, we liked the paper all right, but we couldn't afford it. We hadn't got the money to pay the subscription. Well, he coaxed and insisted. "Well," I says, "I'll just tell you what I'll do," I says, "I'll give you your dinner and an old hen." And he just jumped at it like that and he come in and had his dinner and I give him a fat hen, and he went on, and I got the subscription for the paper!

Sheila Koop: Was there a tea man that came around?

Mrs. Cleghorn: Yes, Fielding, Joe Fielding. I can remember a way back when he came with his team of horses and his tea wagon and you could get tea and coffee. You could get black tea; you could get a mixture of black and green; you could get green tea and coffee and cocoa. Afterwards his son took it on, Eugene Fielding, and I know we delivered eggs to Eugene Fielding for years and I would just get coffee at the shop on Stace Street it was then, it's Dublin Street North at the present time, but I think that shop is closed. Eugene is gone and somebody carried on after he was unable to carry it on. But to my knowledge it's kept as a shop no more. But you always depended on Fieldings for their tea.

Another thing was I noticed in the book that Mr. Koop was talking about, their book, someone said how if you got tea one year the bill, it was a huge tea caddy that you kept your tea in, you got enough for the year when he came the bill was tucked into the tea caddy and the next year around you'd pay for the tea that you'd used and you got your fresh supply.

Sheila Koop: The stallions, for the horse, did they come around?

Mr. Stewart: Oh yeah, they used to come around our way, every once in a while. I can remember the names of them, George Rogerson at Fergus had one and Archie Ferguson in Gait, and a fellow used to drive one from out Montsford way, Ben Hur was his name!

Sheila Koop: Well, I think our time is pretty well at an end. I'll have to thank our participants for some pretty good chuckles this afternoon as well as some interesting information. Thank you all very much.

NOTES:

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The paper was first published in "The Country Town in Rural Ontario s Past: Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Agricultural History of Ontario Seminar, 31 October 1981, University of Guelph", A.A. Brookes, Editor.

It was the last of an innovative series of six annual seminars, the suggestion of Professor Ross Irwin of the School of Engineering. Through his efforts, the College of Arts, the Ontario Agricultural College and the Office of Continuing Education (Director, Dr. Mark Waldron) were brought together in a co-operative effort. Others involved were Professors Terry Crowley and Alan Brookes, both with the Department of History, and in turn, editors of the yearly volumes when the proceedings went to press.

Twenty five years later, any researcher would marvel at the range of topics: farm families; education; religion; horticulture; farm machinery; livestock; horticulture; land surveys; transportation; declining villages; telephones; barns; the cheese industry; the role of the town, and town planning; mills; clothing; women's organizations; cooperatives.

The resultant proceedings were not widely distributed. Most of the essays are worthy of wider attention; many of the authors were, or became, legendary contributors to our familiarity with 19th century Ontario.

Mark Waldron remembers "This series on rural and agricultural history made a significant contribution to the remembering of important aspects of the history of rural communities and the creative people who devoted their lives to improving living conditions in rural Canada. The publication of the presentations made during the series contributed to the wider dissemination of the ideas.

Participation in the actual 'live 'presentations was a most rewarding experience and motivated many people to develop a new appreciation of rural history in Canada. I wish that the series of seminars could be continued today when rural Canada seems to be in such a state of demographic and social change. "

1 Ernest J. Dick, "Oral History in Canada: An Archivist's Commentary," *Archivaria*, 4 (1977), p.34.

2 Alvin Koop and Sheila McMurrich Koop, *Older Voices Among Us* (Erin: Boston Mills Press, 1981). The complete tapes have been deposited in the Wellington County Archives with transcriptions for people to do research.

Anne and Sarkis Sarkisian, at a shower given by co-workers at Beatty Bros.,1942.
Photo: WCMA ph 6713.

Sarkis Sarkisian, An Armenian Immigrant: "Dear Friend"

by Helen Goodall

Miraculously, as a child, Sarkis Sarkisian survived the Armenian massacres to immigrate to Canada. He was soon placed as a farm labourer in a rural home in Wellington County. Sarkis would spend the rest of his life living and working in the area. He died in 1997, but left a rich legacy of taped material and correspondence, letters which usually began "Dear Friend."[1]

These materials help tell part of Sarkis' incredible tale, the tale of a boy (and later a man) who embraced his new life, but at the same time, a person who refused to relinquish important parts of his proud past. Despite many challenges, Sarkis would succeed in keeping his birth name and, after a long and determined effort, in bringing his sister to Canada.

Sarkis was born in 1913 and thought to be orphaned at the age of two. Many members of his family died during the massacre of approximately one and a half million citizens of Armenian descent in Turkey between 1915 to 1922. The genocide, as it is now recognized by the Canadian government, was the deliberate policy of the Turkish government to kill Christian Armenians of military age.[2] Other men, women and children would also die, and almost all Armenians in Turkey suffered incredible horrors.

As a tot, Sarkis was fortunate that his grandmother also survived. For a time, she looked after him and his younger sister, Nuver. When his grandmother could no longer care for Sarkis and Nuver, they began life in a series of orphanages. Sarkis would at first run home. But the remnants of his family realized his best chance of survival was in an orphanage, and his uncle would hoist the lad on his shoulder and return him there. Eventually, the orphans left Adana, and moved to Constantinople, Cyprus; and then Corfu, Greece. As the girls and boys were housed in separate buildings, gradually young Sarkis lost track of his sister.

The young fellow, who mistakenly became known as Sarkis Kirkorian, might have considered himself one of the lucky boys in the Corfu orphanage. He was one of those chosen to go to Canada to be part of a "Noble Experiment," a humanitarian relief agency plan that was supported in part by the Canadian government.[3] Through the Armenian Relief Fund, several hundred Armenian boys were brought from orphanages throughout the Near

East to Ontario.[4] Previously, thousands of child immigrants had been brought from English-speaking countries to North America where they could be useful as farm workers, or domestic servants.[5] The Armenian boys were the first non-English speaking young immigrants. So, rather than being placed directly in homes, the Armenian Relief Organization established a farm where they could learn English and agricultural practices, before being placed on Canadian farms. The farm was near Georgetown Ontario, and the young immigrants became known as the Georgetown Boys.

After sailing on a cattle boat to Marseilles, France, and then travelling by train to Paris, Sarkis and forty-nine other boys arrived at Cedarvale Farm near Georgetown, Ontario on July 1, 1923. In a later interview with his son, Sarkis recalled:

> By golly we landed right on the farm, got off, marched down the hill to the farmhouse building. I was 10 years old, apparently, had never had any schooling and didn't know how to speak any English. There was a big dormitory, and single beds. We had never slept in beds.

The beds were not the only changes to which the boys had to adapt. Their last homes had been with dirt floors, and without the dazzling electric lights they now had. No one spoke their native language. They boys were determined to learn English, but also to keep their own language, and Armenian personnel soon supplemented the farm staff. Armenian dishes would also appear at dinner on occasion.

Georgetown would be Sarkis' home for four years. Then Crawford and Lillian Ireland of RR 1 Belwood, made a specific request that Sarkis be their placement. They wrote to the Reverend Pierce, Secretary of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service of the United Church of Canada (this board had jurisdiction over the Georgetown Boys after 1927) noting the advantage that Sarkis would have with them since, one of his friends lived near by. They told Pierce:

> We would prefer Sarkis Krikorian as Mr. Henderson has his chum (Hovsep Akelian) and the two boys would be company for each other to go to Sunday School and Church together. There is just one farm between our places. We will be good to the boy and use him right in every way as if he were our own.

Rev. Pierce replied happily:

> I am glad to be able to tell you that little Sarkis Krikorian, #14, is coming to your home... . Sarkis is a fine little chap and you would find him very reliable and friendly.

At age 14, Sarkis left Georgetown. He arrived at the Ireland farm on March

3, 1927. Sarkis recounted his experiences years later to his son:

> We were supposed to help them with chores and they were supposed to send us to school …. Ireland's were very good people. They just used me like their own. Mind you they didn't have very much money and they weren't too good farmers as far as I was concerned, but I was quite happy there.

The Irelands and their charge enjoyed a good relationship for two years. The Belwood area family considered him a "real good -hearted boy." But after Sarkis had graduated from Grade Eight at Dracon Public School, he wanted to earn a wage. The original agreement had been that while a boy was in school, he was contracted to be paid $180 per year. He would get $33.75 every three months and the United Church office $11.25, which they would hold in trust. When the young men left school, they were to be paid a full-time wage. The Irelands could not afford the wage and they were aware that Sarkis had another opportunity. They told Pierce:

> We are very sorry we are unable to pay him wages . . . He is very ambitious and wishes to earn a good wage.

On October 24, 1929, I.E. Honsberger of RR 4 Dunnville, Ontario requested:

> ... a boy Sarkisian, who I am told is wanting to leave the place he is at now and come down with his chum Hovsep Akalian who has recently came to Mr. Judson.

Sarkis wrote a poignant letter to Rev. Pierce, which indicates how greatly some of the Georgetown boys valued their friends and long-time ties with their fellow Armenians. Sarkis told Pierce:

> I got a letter from Hovsep Akelian he is one of my best friends. I have known Hovsep when I was six years old and have been with him or near him till a month ago. Hovsep and I get along very well. We both went to church and school together, but now we are both through school and have been planning all summer about starting in our own lives and have all we could to start on a farm together... so, dear friend, I would like to go there if possible and hope to get along as well as I did here.

The young man's desire to remain with Hovsep was very important, and probably related to the wishes of many of the Georgetown boys to preserve their Armenian heritage and connections. This wish had existed even when they were very young boys at Georgetown, and its foundation was laid long before they arrived there. In an interview recorded in 1987, Sarkis tells his son his first

thoughts of coming to Canada. This was formulated at the orphanage in Corfu, during a pre-immigration medical examination.

> We were just like a family and a lot of the boys, oh they said you would have to turn English and you would be adopted by a certain one. We weren't too satisfied with this.

Staying near Hovsep meant that the two would remain with part of their Armenian "family." The teen friends were happily reunited during what would be Sarkis' brief stint in Dunnville. Despite appreciating the Honsbergers and his excitement at being near Hovsep, Sarkis soon found he also missed his former Canadian family.[6]

> They [the Honsbergers] were good to me but I just didn't feel at home there like it did at Irelands' [farm]... When I told them I wanted to go back to around Irelands, oh, he felt pretty bad. I came back to Irelands for a while.

In the correspondence about his change of placement in 1929, Sarkis began his letters "Dear Friend" and signed them "Sarkis Sarkisian." However, Secretary Pierce's return correspondence was always addressed to "Sarkis Krikorian." The explanation lies in Sarkis' recovery of an important piece of his identity, a part he insisted on claiming! For a long time it was thought that boy Number 14's name was Sarkis Krikorian. However, through the mother of one of the other Georgetown boys, Sarkis found his Aunt Dou Dou (Doudon Danielian) who was a nurse, living in Syria. They began a correspondence in English. Through his Aunt Dou Dou, Sarkis discovered that his true name was Sarkis Sarkisian, not Sarkis Kirkorian. While settling into life at Georgetown, some boys had decided to anglicize their names or accepted English renaming; others did not. Sarkis' case is a bit different, as it seems he had been 'misnamed.'

It was not until Pierce ceased to be secretary that his true name was first officially recognized. Rev. D.N. McLachlan, the new Secretary of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service of the United Church of Canada, used Sarkis Sarkisian on November 13, 1930, when it was agreed that Sarkis could now return to the Ireland's. The name change would arise in other correspondence concerning the immigration of Sarkis' sister.

Sarkis wrote out the words "Dear Friend" a number of times beginning in 1927, when he mounted a letter- writing campaign to secure another piece of his Armenian identity. Through Aunt Dou Dou, Sarkis was surprised to learn he had a sister who was still alive. As an older man in 1987, Sarkis recalls receiving Aunt Dou Dou's news some fifty years earlier:

> She told me where my sister was. In the meantime, I had lost track of my sister. We were separated at Corfu. I didn't know where she was. I

> thought she was in France. I wrote a letter to France but I didn't get no answers back or anything.

By 1928 Sarkis was contacting his "Dear Friend(s)" in the hopes of bringing Nuver to Canada. At first there was some confusion about the Sarkis' family name. Immigration official EC. Blair complained, "We cannot identify him with any Armenian boy admitted to Canada."

The comment was passed on to Sarkis who patiently explained,

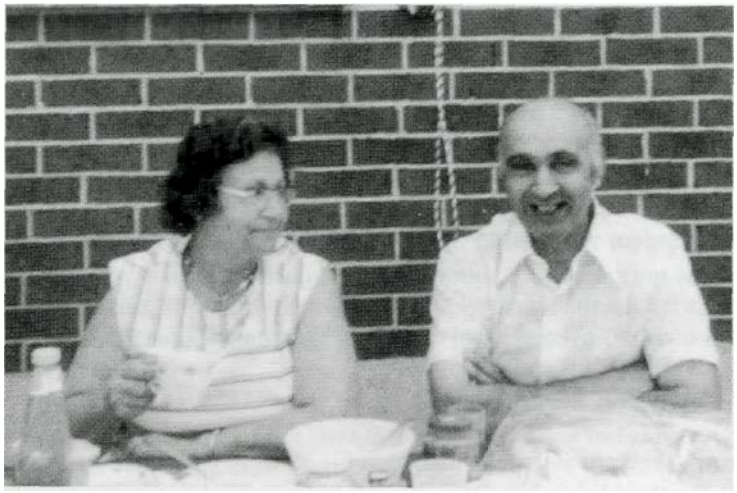
> The reason I changed my name was that Krikorian was not my right name. I do not know how I come to go by the name 'Krikorian.' It was my father's first name. This is what my Aunt told me.

During the year he spent in Dunnville, Sarkis continued to pressure the United Church to bring his sister, Nuver, to Canada. After being reunited with the Irelands in December, 1930, he continued his letter writing. On April 16, 1930, he wrote:

> Dear Friend, two years ago, I was telling you about my sister ... she would like to come to Canada .... I have been praying to God every day we would see each other again. She is 14 years old, her name is Nuver Sarkisian. About three weeks ago in the *New Outlook* paper I seen a piece written by you, that there was 14 girls going to come to Canada in April, and I was hoping she would be one of them, but I got a letter from my Aunt, and the way she wrote that my sister is there yet, if so, I would help in any way to bring her over to Canada if possible. Hoping you a Happy Easter,
>
> Yours truly,
> Sarkis Sarkisian
> (Sarkis Krikorian)

Sarkis' prayers were not to be answered in 1930, or for many years after that. However, he did not abandon his attempts to sponsor Nuver. He grew very creative in his petitions, finding potential employers who wrote to the officials stating that they had a domestic opening for Nuver. Mrs. Jean Spence of RR 3 Arthur, wrote a letter on July 3, 1934 which recommended Sarkis and promised employment to Nuver.

> Re the sister of Sarkis Sarkisian, I hereby promise to employ her in my home, to teach her our Canadian customs and assist her to become a Canadian citizen. Sarkis holds a place second to none in his manly conduct and we are proud to have him a Canadian citizen. Our country can only gain by helping him bring his sister to this country.



Sarkis Sarkisian with his sister Nuver. Photo: WCMA ph 20014.

People on the other side of the ocean also wrote to the officials. Both Aunt Dou Dou and Professor Cass Arthur Reed, of the American University in Beirut, Lebanon, listed the young woman's capabilities, her training and her fluency in English. Nuver was in the employ of Professor Reed's wife as maid and cook's assistant at that time, a position that it was assumed she (and other immigrant women) would take once in Canada.

This did not seem enough for the Canadian immigration officers. F.C. Blair, then Assistant Deputy Minister of Immigration who was renowned for his severity, did not feel that Sarkis' earning power was great enough. Even a 1937 letter from Nuver to McLachlan, telling him that she was a nurse in training in Tiberias, Palestine, seemed to be of little help.

Aunt Dou Dou urged Sarkis not to abandon his quest. Dr. McLachlan kept up slim encouragement to him, pointing out, "They have not consented to bring your sister to Canada. At the same time, they have not definitely refused. So we keep hoping."

Still determined, Sarkis set himself on a quest for economic improvement, hoping to persuade Blair that he could afford Nuver's passage and her assistance once she was in Canada. The Irelands could still not pay him very much, if anything at all. He worked hard at various farm jobs for several years. At one Belwood-area dairy farm, he received $13 per month and worked daily from 5 a.m. until midnight. In 1935, Ross Walker, manager of the Beatty Farm in Fergus Ontario, hired Sarkis.[7] He milked cows and trap-nested 600 R.O.P. (Record of Performance) hens. Sarkis remembered:

> There was a bunch of registered Jerseys which I used to have to milk by hand. Darn Jerseys, I mind they had such little wee tits like that, you just had to milk by your two fingers. Gol, that was hard.

Anne and Sarkis Sarkisian.

Photo: WCMA ph 20015.

When Jack Tweddle bought the poultry end of the Beatty business, Sarkis tried that area of farm employment. "I managed hens for Jack Tweddle for a year," Sarkis recalled. "That's where I saved so much money."

Sarkis was able to rent the Bowley farm neighbouring Ireland's property where he "batched it" for four years and farmed, sharing the Ireland's equipment. Still, life was difficult, "...no heat upstairs and if you put a glass of water on the dresser, she'd freeze solid." Sarkis tried to explain his attempts to his "Dear Friends" who were helping him in his efforts to assist Nuver. On January 20, 1938, Sarkis informed Dr. McLachlan that he had rented a 150-acre farm.

> I have been working desperately in order to make sufficient funds to make it possible for my Sister to be brought here, but try as I might, the expense of running a 150 acre farm is greater than may be imagined and in my two years of farming, I cannot yet see daylight... . I do hope that you are trying to influence the authorities to be lenient with me.

Perhaps temporarily, Sarkis decided to postpone his efforts in his sister's direction, which at that point had been going on for a decade, and to look after his own personal and domestic needs. Sarkis said,

> I began to think to myself, I was 26 or 27. I sez to myself, *What kind of life is this for a young fella like me? To be workin'there, batchin'it all the time?*

In February of 1940, Sarkis sold everything and cleared about $1,400, which he said "... was a lot of money in those days." He and a friend, Fred Aitchison, headed out west in Sarkis' '36 Chevy. Eventually, they found work helping with the harvest.

Deciding to take the trip out West rewarded Sarkis with the acquaintance of his future wife, Anne Popial. After marrying, the Sarkisians purchased their own farm on the fifth line of West Garafraxa Township, where Anne and Sarkis would work and raise their two children: Bob and Joanne. Sarkis still desired to be reunited with his sister, and Nuver was not forgotten.

As the "Dear Friend" letters end in 1938, not as much is known about Sarkis' search after this date. It is possible that pre-and post-war changes in Canada's immigration policy set more bureaucratic snares in Sarkis' way. Finally, in 1954 a North Star, four-engine plane arrived at the international airport in Malton and a joyful reunion took place.[8]

Nuver settled in Toronto. She had been a head midwife in Lebanon, but with no degree equivalency in Canada, she worked as a housekeeper, and then as a clerk at T. Eaton's department store. Nuver married Levon Vassoyian, also a former Georgetown Boy, and they had two children. Nuver's family enjoyed going to the country to visit Sarkis. Her daughter, Marion, writes, "Mom would always cook some traditional Armenian dishes like Dolma (stuffed eggplant), pilaf (rice), and moudsoon (homemade yoghurt) and especially baklava. Uncle Sarkis loved the food, and he loved being with his sister."

Sarkis did more than succeed in contributing to the flavour of Wellington County life, he enhanced it. In keeping his Armenian heritage proudly alive, he added distinctive flavour to life in the area. Sarkis' "Dear Friend" letters were able to assert and maintain his identity by making authorities aware of his true name, and bringing another genocide survivor to the province. While Sarkis' story is not yet fully revealed, knowing more about his and other immigrants' lives is important to appreciating the development of the colours in the fabric of our collective heritage.

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Sarkis Sarkisian Collection, Privately held by the Bob Sarkisian family.

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END NOTES:

1. Unless noted, all the quotes are taken from the letters in the Sarkis Sarkisian Collection, privately held by the Bob Sarkisian family, or from the audio tape Bob Sarkisian made of his father in 1987 in the same collection. The letters, written by Sarkis and his correspondents, date from 1923 to 1938.
2. J. Apramian, *The Georgetown Boys*, (Georgetown Armenian Boys' Association: Winona, 1976) p.12. This is a good source of information for more of the fascinating story of the Georgetown Boys.
3. *The Georgetown Boys*, p. 18.
4. After 1927, the program was administered by the United Church of Canada.
5. Marjorie Kohli, *The Golden Bridge: Young Immigrants to Canada, 1833-1939* (Natural Heritage Books: Toronto, 2003).
6. While Hovsep and Sarkis remained friends the rest of their lives, Hovsep stayed in the Dunnville area, and eventually changed his name to Joseph Wiseman. He owned a construction company and was a real-estate dealer.
7. The Beatty factory was a major employer in Fergus. The Beatty family also owned a farm managed by Ross Walker who hired Sarkis. After Milton and Bill Beatty's friend, Jack Tweddle, purchased the farm, Sarkis continued working there.
8. Helen Goodall, interviews with Bob Sarkisian, 2005.

Avruskin/Borovoy family, Salem, 1912. Dora and Sam at back, left, with children in front. Photo courtesy of Harley Garshowitz.

"One of the People": The Avruskins of Salem

by Elysia DeLaurentis

Traditionally it is the immigrants of the early 19th century who are celebrated for their conversion of wild forest to burgeoning town. Over the years immigrants have continued to call Wellington County home, and though they no longer have to contend with a wall of virgin forest, all face the hardships of adapting to life in a new land. Cleverness, courage, resourcefulness and adaptability have continued to be traits of the successful immigrant. These can easily be applied to Dora and Sam Avruskin, Russian Jews who made the leap from homeland to Canada at the turn of the twentieth century. Historical records reveal pieces of their lives, but not the day-to-day intricacies remembered by those who knew them well. By combining historical sources with the memories of their daughter Isabel, a picture of their family's life can be pieced together.

In the northern Russian town of Krula, Velvel Zeev Borovoy and Freida Gittel Shushter welcomed daughter Dora into the world on 21 October 1885. She grew up in Russia and by her teenage years had met cousin Samuel Avruskin. Sam had been born in the village of Mogolev, Gerbenia, also in northern Russia, and was seven years Dora's senior. Little is known of their courtship, but in 1904 Dora and Sam were wed.[1]

Sam worked as a drummer in the Army, and the family recounts that after Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war[2], he gave thoughts to a better life, and the peace and prosperity of Canada.[3] The year before had seen a renewed wave of pogroms against the Jews, in which hundreds were killed, injured, and sexually assaulted. Newspapers at the time published anti-Semitic articles, and attacks were frequent between 1903 - 1906.[4] In this same period, the bloodshed of January 1905 saw the beginning of the Russian Revolution.[5]

After Russia's defeat at Port Arthur in 1904, her conflict with Japan continued. Having lost many soldiers, the Russian government repealed the legislation that exempted from conscription anyone who had already spent four years in the Army. Russia undertook raids on her own towns and villages, focusing on Jewish quarters and forcing men to the Eastern front. Thousands managed to escape the country with the help of neighbours and friends, but many weren't as lucky. In March of 1905 a group of sixty Russians arrived in

Velvel and Freida Borovoy, Salem, ca. 1915. Photo courtesy Ariene soles.

New York and were temporarily put up at the Hebrew Shelter house in East Broadway. All from the town of Zitomera, journalists recounted the conditions in Russia that led to their arrival,

> Unexpectedly one morning...a regiment of Cossacks swooped down upon the town and at saber point forced 1200 men to leave their homes and start for the front. Two of the men, Elias and Moses Wilensky, brothers, were among the wealthiest men of the town and said that all of their property was confiscated and their families left in destitution. ... As the brothers were taken from their desks, more than 150 of their employees were driven along with them, six of whom escaped and are among the party that arrived here. 'Time was not given us to say goodbye to our families' said Moses Wilensky. The brothers said that after being taken out of the town by the Cossacks, they were put onto a train and started for St. Petersburg. Although closely guarded, many jumped through the car windows, several of whom were killed. Some got away at railroad stations and others were shot as they fled. Out of the 1200, about 200 escaped and of this number, 60 reached Trieste and obtained passage for America. It was stated by Russians yesterday that at least 30,000 of their countrymen have landed in New York since Christmas.[6]

Passenger lists reveal that most Russian immigrants entering Canada at the turn of the twentieth century were destined for either Toronto or Montreal where ethnic enclaves had developed. Having been segregated to the Pale area of Russia several years earlier, most Russian Jews were not farmers by trade when they arrived in Canada. By 1911, 94% of Jews in Canada lived in urban

centres.[7] Sam Avruskin instead was destined for the tiny village of Salem, nestled amid the farmland of Wellington County. Family lore states that he chose to follow his cousin, whom his daughter Isabel remembers was "a Solomon". As she reflects,

> Somehow or other, everyone landed in Salem. So they ask me why did my father choose Salem? Because he had to get away from his home there; things were not well. And the cousin found his way to Salem somehow, so he followed him; that was the only reason. If it wasn't for him, I don't know where he would have landed. I don't think [the cousin] knew where he was going, really. Why did he choose Salem? Because Salem was just a little bit of a hole at that time.[8]

This cousin first appears in Salem records in the spring of 1905. In that year twenty-one year old Harry Soloman [sic] was living with twenty-eight year old Harry Raport in Salem on Victoria Street[9]. Both were pedlars, and both were Jewish (in fact they shared the distinction of being the only Jewish heads of household listed in all of Nichol Township). Like Sam would later, both of these men appear to have joined the Wellington Rifles shortly after their arrival. The *Flora Express* reported in June that the,

> Elora Company of the 30th Regiment left on Monday at noon for camp at London...The company is full strength and includes among its numbers two Russians who were glad to take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown and forswear Russia and its imperial ruler. It is rather a strange commentary on the conditions existing in the two countries, that men should leave their native land to avoid compulsory military service and then voluntarily enlist in the militia of the foreign country to which they had come.[10]

It was perhaps the freedom of choice that enticed them to join, and from a practical standpoint, with no family here, membership in the company would have given them introduction to a network of local men.

A Borovoy family legend attempts to explain Solomon's presence here. The legend recounts that at an earlier date, members of the Borovoy family had settled in Salem, Massachusetts. A cousin who spoke no English arrived in North America from Russia and tried to communicate his desired destination in the U.S. When he got off the train, he found he'd arrived near Salem, Ontario instead." This story is a wonderful piece of family lore, but doubt can be cast on the events it describes. The National Railway Publication Company's *Official Guide of Railways* lists twenty-three stops called Salem in North America, but doesn't list one for Ontario. It is therefore unlikely that a railway employee's misunderstanding is to blame, and rather that something or someone brought the two men to the Elora area. Either way, Harry Solomon must have liked life in Salem and its opportunities for growth, having written

to his family in Russia to recommend it.

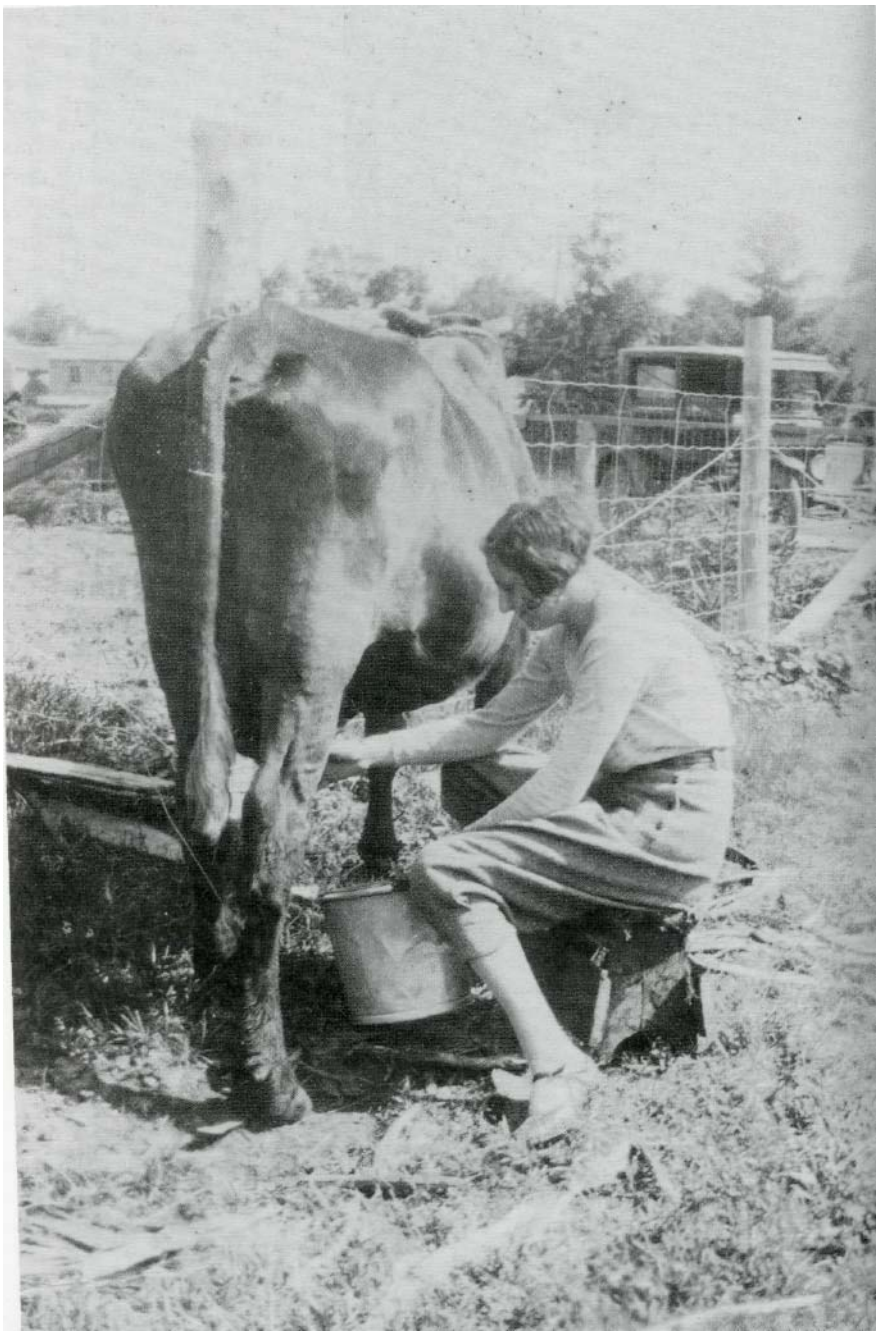
Family history recounts that Sam left Russia on his own, coming to Canada in 1905 to stay with his cousin in Salem, then once settled, planned to send for Dora. The Canadian Census of 1911 lists Sam as having immigrated in 1904, but he must have arrived in late 1905 or early 1906.[12] At that time, Salem was home to about 300 people and boasted a dozen local businesses. Though Sam Avruskin left no written account of his first impressions of southwestern Ontario, he was likely as pleasantly startled by the contrast as his countryman Berco Flman. Avruskin and Flman arrived in Ontario around the same time, with Flman settling in nearby Grand Valley. In September 1905 the *Elora Express* reported that,

> Grand Valley harbors within its borders an interesting person in Berco Flman, a Russian who escaped from that country a few weeks ago rather than go to the front in the far East. He had received notice of being drafted for service... but instead went in hiding in a neighbouring village for that length of time until his wife and friends provided him with sufficient funds with which to reach Canada. He crossed over to Hamburg...sailing from there to London, thence to Quebec and on to Toronto, where Hyman Soltz, a compatriot, met him three weeks ago. Flman is a blacksmith by trade...but found it difficult to make even a living there on account of the excessive taxation.. .Here he is amazed at the prospect of wealth to be gathered in, a month's wages for a good mechanic equaling a year in Russia. Then the appearance of the average farm is a revelation of riches undreamed of, the area of land, cattle and horses, etc., makes the owners all appear as millionaires to him. Wonderfully pleasing as all this may be to him, the freedom and liberty exercised by all strikes him most forcibly, and pleased him best. He says Russia is in no better state than the direst reports indicate. The rich men have been bled of their money, and cannot give employment to the labouring class, who are suffering, while the immense drafts of men to the front has paralyzed all classes of trade.. .Mr. Flman expects his wife to come out here when he has acquired the language a little better. No more Russia for him. [13]

Though Sam Avruskin's cousin provided some introduction to the area, for an immigrant soldier who didn't speak English, job opportunities in Salem were not numerous. By family accounts, Sam became a pedlar walking around Salem, Elora and neighbouring townships selling inexpensive household wares. Through dint of hard work he scraped together enough to send for his wife and child. In late 1906 Dora, son Ben, with her brother Alex made the journey to Canada[14].

The Avruskin family first appear in local records when Sam Avruskin and Alexander Borovoy jointly purchased several Victoria Street lots in early July 1907. A week later the Avruskin family grew and Dr. Robertson registered the

Sam and Dora Avruskin’s 50th Wedding Anniversary, Toronto, 1954. Left to right: Till, Isabel, Kay, Mary, Bess, Dora, Sam, Ben, Morris, Alex and Bill.



Marv Avruskin milking a cow in Salem, late 1920s,

Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears.

birth of Bessie Averouskin [sic]. Tax assessments the following spring show the Avruskin/Borovoy household consisting of six people and one dog, the people presumably Alex, his wife, Sam, Dora, young Ben, and baby Bess. Sem Avrusken [sic] and Dora's brother Alexander Borovoy are listed as residents on several adjoining properties, and both give their occupations as "pedlar".[15]

County law required pedlars to purchase a license, though like most who engaged in that occupation, neither of them purchased one.[16] There was an element of risk involved with that decision, for if discovered, they faced the possibility of heavy fines or imprisonment. In 1905 the *Flora Express* reported that County Constable Davidson had interviewed two "shoddy cloth" pedlars named Hanratty and Kerr, and served them papers for selling goods without a license. The report advises that "there is a host of such men doing business in this county, and by the Treasurer's report, only a few have taken out the required permission to sell. It is everybody's business to ask dealers of this kind to show their certificate, and if they haven't it they are simply robbing the county treasury to that extent".[17] Thomas Hanratty and Felix Kerr were summoned to appear the next morning before the police magistrate, but stole out of town that night. Constable Davidson followed them to Toronto, arrested them and brought them back to Drayton. They were fined $99 or 20 days in jail, their fine being paid by one of their Toronto cohorts. Though the police were quite determined in this case, it is possible that they focused their efforts on pedlars who were dishonest or caused a disturbance in some way, giving men like Sam Avruskin a warning only.

In January of 1910 Sam and Dora bought the house on Woolwich Street where they would spend the rest of their time in Salem.[18] The next year the family was established and had grown substantially. The census taken that year lists thirty-one year old Sam as a "junk dealer" though he was making enough money to feed and clothe his four children.[19] The oldest child Ben, born July 1905 in Russia, was then five years old. The younger children, three year old Bessie, two year old Morris, and nine month old Mary were all delivered by Dr. Robertson of Elora in their Salem home. They shared their house with two other men, both recently emigrated Russian Jews. Twenty-one year old Norman Shiffrin[20] and twenty year old Lewis Schwartz were also listed as junk dealers. Isabel remembers that throughout her life her mother always welcomed people into her home and was willing to lend a hand. She says,

> My mother was a hostess. She was the type who would say to her family, even her relatives living in Toronto 'just come and visit me any time you like'. Well they did! And let me tell you this, there was always food around, and always a bed to sleep on. Even if the kids slept on the floor, there was always room for somebody else. And my mother looked after them too; she really waited on them. You know a lot of people don't do things like that.

Once Sam and Dora were established in Salem, the rest of the family

followed. Dora's parents and siblings moved to Salem, and Isabel recalls her grandparents at the house. Casting her mind back to 1915, she reveals,

> I remember when I was two years old — unusual but I do. Well I remember my grandfather, my mother's father, and he used to come and visit us. His name was Borovoy, and they had a home of their own, my grandmother and grandfather [on] a little road that led off the main street. And my mother's family, some of them came over with the help of my parents. I remember that my Uncle Lazarus Borovoy lived there, and my Uncle Joe lived there in Salem for a short time, until they found themselves. And my father's mother came out to live with us.[21] She came when I was a baby, so that's why I was her favourite, because I was the baby in the house with all the other children. And so we had my mother's parents there, and my father's mother, and other parts of the Borovoy family.

Isabel has always looked up to her mother as a modern woman before her time. Although a busy and capable mom, Dora was not content to confine herself to mundane housework. Isabel recalls that,

> She wasn't what you would call a housewoman, you know, though she brought up nine children. She was a wonderful cook and a wonderful baker, but I don't remember my mother ever cleaning the house. She always had somebody in to do the cleaning. George Wissler's mother[22] used to come in and help her, as I recall. And she wouldn't do laundry in those days, because we didn't have the electric machines. Someone would either come in and do the laundry, or she'd send the laundry out.

Dora didn't have the time to clean house, for like many women today, she was both a mother and entrepreneur. Isabel explains that,

> She liked the business world and she was a great sewer. When [the cleaning lady] would come in, she would be sewing. She loved sewing, and she could make lovely dresses. I remember so many of the girls in Elora would come up and have the dresses that my mother made. I know that the dining room was a small room, but she made these shelves and kept the [sewing] equipment there, and the accessories like shoes and bags and hosiery. She would come into Toronto, or my father sometimes would, and buy the materials and she would sew dresses for the girls in Elora. And they would come up and buy the material and she would fit them with the pattern, and she would sew the dresses. And that was her pleasure. She liked doing that better than housework.

Isabel lists one of her mother's modern traits as the fact that she drove a car. Another example was Dora's participation in local Sunday School events.

View of Salem from a postcard sent in 1905. The house that the Avruskins would call their own for many years is visible just across
the bridge on the left, on the corner of Woolwich and Mill Street.

Photo courtesy Ariene soles.

"My mother, she ran races. Well my mother was very modern; for that era she was really a modern woman. We had a lot of young kids around in the village, and they had Sunday School picnics, and the parents would join in, and my mother would run races and win!"

It might strike one as unusual that a Jewish family would be attending Christian Sunday School picnics, but when asked if they experienced any religious discrimination, Isabel clarifies, "No! This I can tell you, at that time, no. We felt like we were one of everybody; we were one of the people. When I went to Salem School, I was quite at ease, always". By the 1920s and 30s they were no longer the only Jewish family in town, though the local Jewish population was still quite small. Isabel remembers, "There were some of the Borovoys, and there were a few Jewish families [that] did move in, but only temporarily. Dinger had a store in Elora, and Wisebrod had a store in Elora. Dinger, his daughters came out after a while and they lived there upstairs". [23] Also in Salem were members of families who had married into the Borovoy family. The Garshowitz family lived in Salem for many years, and the Taradays would come to Salem from Kitchener to visit and for special occasions.

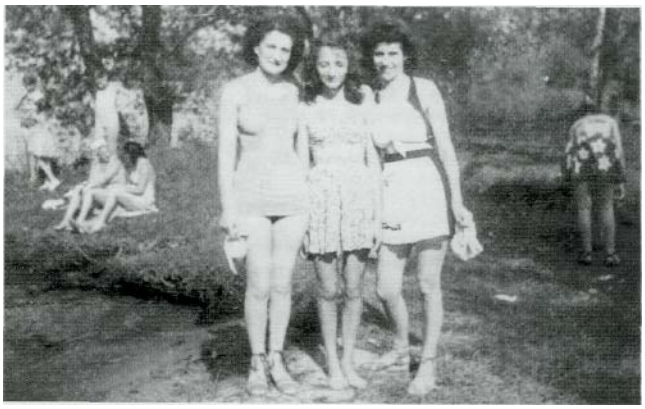
Though small, the local Jewish population was growing, and had no official place of worship. Despite an abundance of churches in nearby Elora, neither Salem nor Elora had a synagogue. When asked where she received spiritual guidance, Isabel recalls that,

> Occasionally somebody came in, but mostly from our parents, I guess, because how much religious education can you get if there's no one around to teach you? Morris' three children went [to Guelph]. Arlene went, the two boys went for sure to Guelph, and Michael and Alex's son went. They had their Bar Mitzvah in Guelph, a joint Bar Mitzvah [for] Alex's son and Bill's son. It was a beautiful party they had at the hotel. That was a lovely, lovely affair. They have the Synagogue in Guelph, and those kids did go, but it wasn't going when I lived there. We just had to go by what our parents taught us.

Day-to-day religious instruction was received at home but holidays like Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were different. Isabel remembers that,

> When the High Holy Days came, in Salem, when we were little kids we'd go to Kitchener. But when we had more of the family living around, we'd rent a house in Saletn and we'd have services right there, conducted by Alex Borovoy, and my father, and I think my uncle in Hamilton. And after that we had a big party with a lot of little kids - you know everybody had little kids. I remember we used to look forward to that.

The nine children that Dora and Sam raised were Ben, Bess, Morris, Mary,



Isabel, Till and Kay Avruskin ready for a swim, Salem, ca. 1933. Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears.

Kay, Isabel, Till, Alex, and Bill, all born between 1905 and 1918. They attended Salem Public School then some moved on to the High School in Elora. As the family grew, so did the Avruskins' good fortune. A natural businessman, Sam had a head for figures. While peddling, he began to buy the odd cow or horse and sell it at a profit. Deciding this was a more lucrative venture than peddling, he progressed from selling household items to running a successful cattle business, shipping cattle from Salem to the stockyards of Toronto.

Despite the fact that by then Salem was very much their home, Dora and Sam worried about the opportunities available to their children in such a small community. As time went by, the older children left to continue their education in Toronto. Isabel recalls of her siblings,

> Alex went to Parkdale Collegiate here, and so did Bill. When they finished, they both decided they wanted to go back to Salem and get into the cattle business. Ben's the only one who wasn't in the business. He had to come into Toronto if he wanted to get into some kind of profession, because there was no talk about anything else - just that he would be educated. When he came [to Toronto] he was too young for medicine, so he worked in a bank for a year. After he was finished with the bank, he took arts for a year, and then he took medicine. He was very bright.
>
> I only went one year to the Elora High School, and I came here [to Toronto] because of the other ones who were here. What happened was the older ones were getting a little older and they couldn't find themselves in a small town at that time. Things were not progressive at all, so they came here to Toronto. My father bought a house.[24] Ben, Bess, Morris and Mary, they came and my father would come to Toronto and my mother would come weekends, or whenever they could. Morris

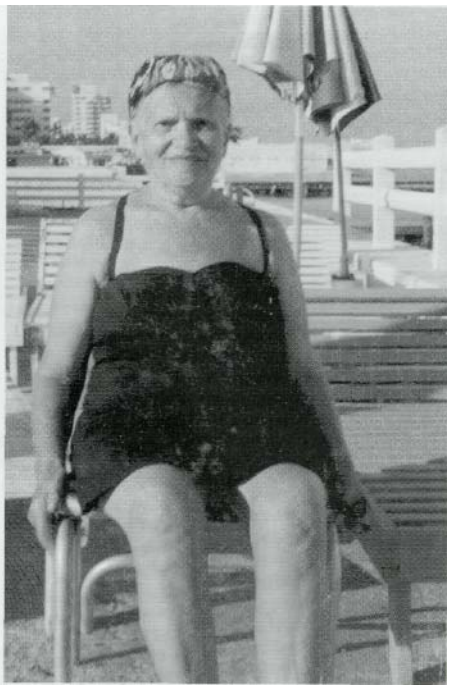
> was busy with his pharmacy [studies], and Mary was working, and Bess was going to business college; they were all going to take something. And my mother and father decided after a while, when I started getting older...they decided to move here, and my father would go back and forth.

Sam turned the thriving cattle business over to his sons, and he and Dora moved to the house in Toronto. Isabel describes her parents as "always interested". Though retired, they remained active all their lives. They joined the local Shaw Street Synagogue, not far from their house, and Dora became involved with its Women's Auxiliary and the Hebrew Benevolent Society.[25] Isabel reflects that,

> When he came to the city, [my father] didn't have too much to do with the business out there anymore. [He] kind of gradually lost touch, and then the boys took it over. When they moved to Toronto, [my mother] was always working with my father when he got into anything. He would buy little houses and sell them, and always with the consent and direction of my mother. They would get together on it. They bought them, sold them, made a little bit of money as they went along. That kept him active, kept him going. I mean, a lot of people would have just retired; he didn't do that, he kept going.

Having been sick for some time, Samuel Avruskin passed away in Toronto in 1958. His obituary records his life in Salem, local friends, and family.[26] Three years later Dora died, and the Elora paper reported that sorrow was felt by the "many old friends in this community and especially in Salem, where Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Avruskin made their home for over twenty-five years".[27] When Dora and Sam had initially decided to make the move from Salem to Toronto, Isabel remembers that her mother's only hesitation was in hoping that her new neighbours would be as wonderful to her as the people of Salem had been.[28] Her Salem neighbours had visited with her, shared recipes, laughs and hardships, and most importantly, had welcomed her to the community. The support the Avruskins received from the local community, combined with their intelligence and adaptability, led to their success in their adopted land.

Today, at the age of 93, Isabel is the only surviving child of Dora and Samuel Avruskin, though their legacy lives on in the number of successful grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins who continue to grow and contribute to life in modern Canada. They still have family living in Salem, a community that now boasts an "Avruskin Street". Were it not for Samuel and Dora's courageous decision to follow their cousin half way around the world, Wellington County, and the village of Salem in particular, would not have been as rich a place.



Dora Avruskin in Florida, 1959.
Photo courtesy Arlene Soles.

Dora and Samuel Avruskin with baby, ca. 1945.
Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears.

Dora and Samuel Avruskin, March 1957.
Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears.

Dora Avruskin with her youngest grandson (Kay's son) Melvin Orecklin, at age 8 months, February 1950.
Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears.

Mary Avruskin with dogs, Salem, late 1920s. Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears.

Annabelle and Doreen, children of Mary Laywine (nee Avruskin), with dog. Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears.

Mary Avruskin in the Elora Gorge, late 1920s. Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears

Dora Avruskin holding child, likely in **Salem, ca. 1925.** Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears.

Dora Avruskin holding child, likely in Salem, ca. 1925.
Photo courtesy Isabel Schwartz and Doreen Sears.

NOTES:

1 Information compiled by genealogist Hartley Garshowitz: http://familytreemaker.genealogy.eom/users/g/a/r/Hartley-Garshowitz/index.html. 21 January 2006. His sources for these dates and places are the reminiscences of Dora and Sam's children, collected by the family in 1986. That they were cousins was provided via telephone by Isabel Schwartz (nee Avruskin), 07 Feb. 2006, and by Arlene Soles in March 2006. Various family members recall Dora and Sam's large 50th wedding anniversary held in Toronto in 1954. The 1904 date is also referenced in an anonymous untitled poem composed in honour of Dora and Sam Avruskin in the *50th Anniversary of the Borovoy Annual Reunion 1938-1988.*

2 In February 1904 Japan attacked Russia's Port Arthur. Though Russia increased her meagre troops throughout that year, the Japanese Army was better trained and more than twice the size, leading to Russia's defeat. "Checkmate at the Russian Border: Russia-Japanese Conflict before Pearl Harbour" by Laurie Barber. University of Waikato [New Zealand], 2000; http://zhukov.mitsi.com/Russo.htm; The *Elora Express* published long, illustrated, weekly accounts of the war throughout 1904.

3 "The Avruskins are Achievers" by Isabel and Marjorie Avruskin, *Elora Sentinel,* special edition, 1982, page 40.

4 Reports of these conflicts filtered to Elora and Salem through the local newspapers. The article "A Jew in Russia: Interview with De Plehve (Recently Assassinated), on Emigration to Siberia" by Lucien Wolf, was printed in the *Elora Express,* 02 November 1904, page 4. In it Russian Minister De Plehve explains the problems surrounding "The Jewish Question" in Russia, advocates the assimilation of upper class Russian Jews, and the emigration of Jewish peasants en masse. At the time the Russian government was considering rounding up these peasants and sending them to an allocated portion of Siberia, but Wolf's Russian Jewish friends feared that anywhere in Russia they were sent, might later be retaken by the government.

5 Over a hundred thousand working class citizens marched on the Czar's home in St. Petersburg to protest their horrible working and living conditions. Though the protesters were unarmed, the Czar ordered them shot. Many died and many more were injured. The events of that day led to continued conflict between the Russian lower classes and the government, the Revolution lasting till 1907. The Central V.I. Lenin Museum, Moscow, Russia, 29 Jan. 2006: http://www.stel.ru/museum/first_russian_revolution_1905.htm

6 "Sixty Russian Refugees Arrive in New York", *Elora Express,* 15 March 1905, page 7.

7 "Rag & Bone Men" by Benita Baker, *The Beaver,* December 2004/January 2005, pp. 24-25; Thousands of passenger lists are also available for viewing online, most of which have been scanned and/or transcribed by genealogical organizations.

8 Interview with Isabel Schwartz (nee Avruskin) by Elysia DeLaurentis and Joan Bosomworth, Toronto, Ontario, 30 Sep. 2003. Conducted while undertaking research for the Pilkington Township History Book. Unless stated otherwise, all further quotations from Isabel Schwartz are from this interview.

9 Nichol Township Tax Assessment Roll, 1905, lines 665-667. Raport and Soloman were renting Lots 6 - 8 on the West side of Victoria Street, Salem, from 53 year old Thomas Evans of Elora, a Methodist.

10 *Elora Express*, 21 June 1905, page 8.

11 Information related by Hartley Garshowitz via telephone, March 2006. He recalls hearing the story as a child, as did Morris Avruskin's daughter Arlene Soles. A version of this story was published in an article about the Borovoy family, but Dora's brother Matthew who was interviewed related that it was his father Velvel Borovoy who had made this initial mistake. "Ancestor's error long ago put family on right track" by Harold Levy, undated newspaper clipping, ca. 1997. We know that Velvel and Freida Borovoy arrived after Dora and Sam were settled in Ontario. The 1911 Census of Salem, page 8, shows the household of William [Velvel] Borovoy, wife Freda and sons Lazarus, Solomon, and Jacob, all of whom are listed as having immigrated in 1909. Their language commonly spoken was "Russian Jewish".

12 I found no indication he Sam was here in early 1905. All accounts say he arrived before Dora, and daughter Bess was conceived around November 1906, likely in Ontario.

13 *Elora Express*, 20 September 1905, page 4. Reprinted from the *Grand Valley Star*.

14 Family lore states that Dora made the journey with her brother Alex. The 1911 Census lists Dora's year of immigration as 1907 and Alexander's as 1906. Dates on census records must always be taken with a grain of salt, but we know that Dora and Sam were together in November 1906 when Bessie was conceived; 1911 Census of Salem Village, Nichol Township, pages 6 & 8. There is no listing for the Avruskins on 1907 Tax Assessments taken in March of that year, but Bessie was born in Salem that summer.

15 08 July 1907 Timothy Healey & wife sold Sem Avruskin [sic] and Alexander Borovoy Lots 1 through 4, on the northeast side of Victoria Street, Salem. They took out a mortgage from Matthew Brohmann the same day for half the value of the property. Nichol Township Land Abstract Index, Vol.1, pp. 263-266. Ontario birth registration shows Bessie born on 11 July 1907. 1908 tax records show Sam Avruskin listed as a resident of Lot 9 north side of Woolwich Street, Lots 1 & 2 east side of Victoria Street, and Lot 1 west side of Water Street. Alex Borovoy is listed on part of lots 112 & 114 and Lot 9 Woolwich Street, and Lots 1 & 2 east side of Victoria Street, and Lot 1 on the west side of Water Street. 1908 Nichol Township Assessments, Salem Village, numbers 618-620.

16 The County's yearly financial statement included License Returns, listing licensed pedlars, how much they paid, and how they peddled (e.g., "valise", or "horse and cart").

17 *Elora Express*, 22 November 1905, page 8 and *Elora Express*, 06 December 1905, page 8.

18 Lot 114 of Erb's Survey of Salem, which fronts on to Woolwich Street, southwest of the bridge. On 08 January 1910 Sem Avraskin bought the property from widow Mary Fladd, and held it until he sold it to his son Morris in 1955. Nichol Township Land Abstract Index, Vol. 1, page 448. Morris Avruskin's children also grew up in that house.

19 1911 Census of Salem Village, Nichol Township, page 8, household 111. Language commonly spoken was listed for each member as "Jew[ish] & Efnglish]".

20 Handwriting on the census is difficult to decipher. I suspect the name is Shiffrin, as the Wellington County Licence Returns for December 1906 list a William Shiffrin of Dorking who purchased a pedlar's licence. He could be a relative.

21 In reminiscences gathered by the family in 1986, both Isabel and Bessie Avruskin recalled their paternal grandmother Chia Dobba Avruskin who died in Toronto in 1925. Both recalled that their paternal grandfather was Tunchin Avruskin, and Bessie remembered that he died in Russia. It is likely that their grandmother came to Salem after her husband passed away. Her death registration lists her name as Ida Dubias Auruskin.

22 George Wissler was very close to the Avruskin family and spent a lot of time with them growing up. Due to unfortunate domestic circumstances, he was taken in and raised by Henry and Barbara Wissler who had no children of their own, and he took their last name. It was George's birth mother and not Mrs. Wissler who did the cleaning for Dora. Interview with Isabel Schwartz, 30 Sep. 2003.

23 A. Dinger dealt in furs, altering and repairing fur coats in the 1930s. Wisebrod was Polish and spoke little English. In the late 1920s he had a shoe store on Metcalfe Street, moved to Geddes Street in 1927, but went bankrupt in July 1928. From research undertaken by Stephen Thorning.

24 At 217 Gladstone Avenue, Toronto.

25 From Isabel Schwartz via telephone, 07 Feb. 2006.

26 "Late S. Avruskin Buried in Toronto", *Elora Express*, 23 October 1958, page 1, column 3.

27 "Mrs. S. Avruskin", *Elora Express*, Thursday 27 July 1961, page 1, column 6.

28 From Isabel Schwartz via telephone, 07 February 2006. Her Toronto neighbours also proved good friends.

From Ukraine to Eramosa: A Trip Down Memory Lane

by Helen (Buczek) Lenko

Amelia Buczek.
Photo courtesy of Helen (Buczek) Lenko.

Mother. No other word in the English Language conjures up so much love, affection, respect and admiration. Here is my mother's story of a long journey from way back in the old country, Eastern Europe, to her final resting place in Guelph Ontario. Amelia Sydor was born in 1918 in a little village in Ukraine. Her father immigrated to Canada first, as many of the early settlers did, to earn money to bring over their wives and children; he had relations here already .

On September 29, 1929, my grandma, Amelia and her two brothers, Walter and Steve, sailed to Quebec City from the port of Gdansk, Poland. My mother, Amelia, was 11 years old and leaving her friends and other family members for a totally new world.

A long trip by train brought them to Hamilton where my grandfather had settled. They lived in Hamilton until 1932 and then moved to Wellandport. Grandfather continued living in Hamilton and pursuing his skills as a tailor. Grandfather and Peter, the young man who would later marry my mother, both boarded with a Polish family. Peter had a car and on weekends he would drive grandpa out to the farm where he met my mother, Amelia.

In 1936, Amelia (now 18), and Peter Buczek were married and moved to Hamilton where Helen and Ted were born. Later they moved to Guelph where two more sons were born - Joe, and Walter who died in infancy.

In April of 1944 Peter made the decision to buy a farm on the 5th line of Eramosa from Frank Stout of Rockwood. It was a very hard, labour-intensive transition for my mother. As dad continued his job at the Malleable Iron Factory in Guelph, mother somehow managed to mind the farm, the children, and the garden without hydro, running water, or telephone.

Before the hydro came down the road, pioneer hardships were the norm for mom. I remember pumping 26 pails of water with my brothers, and lugging them across the laneway to be heated on the big wood stove. I would be in awe

as mother did huge laundry loads and they would be sparkling white, flapping on the clothes-lines. Chester, another son, was born in 1947.

My mother managed many jobs. The "interior designer" urge would hit my mom and she would get into Rockwood, buy rolls of wallpaper and before we returned from our school day at SS#6 Eramosa, another bedroom would have a new look. Once as a bonus, I was surprised by a lovely new dressing table (really two orange crates with a top board circled by a skirt of pink curtain material).

In another starring role she would be a "cattle herder" when the neighbours would ring on the wall-mounted party-line phone that our cows were escaping through the cedar rail fence and were heading down Harwood's Sideroad towards Lush's farm. Off she would walk to drive the beasts back to home pastures.

There were cows, three horses, pigs, chickens, geese and even Banty hens to feed and care for, and, as dad had to leave before daybreak, barn chores fell to my mother. She either took my brothers and me to the barn where we sat on overturned pails while she milked the cows, or left us alone in the house.

Neighbours played a vital role in our lives back in the 1940s and 1950s. Everyone helped each other whether in time of sickness, harvest or even with a ride to town. We were blessed with the most wonderful neighbours, Edna and Lome Allan, across the road where we spent many hours as children playing or having wonderful tea biscuits and maple syrup. The Harwoods, Nellis and the Elmer Allans further down the road always provided a lovely hospitable welcome to mom if she felt like getting out of the house to socialize.

The "horticulturist" emerged in mom's resume as she planted a huge garden of every vegetable imaginable. A plot of raspberries stretched way to the road. Oh yes, all this had to be picked when ready and usually it was by the labour pool of one, my morn.

As "social convener" for her children, mom attended our various activities. She would always be on duty as "lifeguard" at Couling's swimming hole by our school. At the Centre Inn ball games she led the cheering section. She was there at the end of the school year, enjoying the annual school-section picnics at the Rockwood park. In December, she proudly sat out front clapping for our starring roles during the school Christmas concert (you know the ones) with the creaky floorboards and the curtains hanging on a wire strung across the stage.

Dangling promises of a trip into Guelph if we were good had us behaving like angels. With mom as "travel agent and tour guide" we would visit Kresges' soda fountain, Woolworths and sometimes as a special treat a cowboy movie: Gene Autry or Roy Rogers at the Capital Theatre for five cents for a ticket.

Mom "the economist" used to stretch the cream can money when Lloyd Blacklock would come for the weekly pickup. The grand sum of sometimes $2.35 would provide me with tokens for a cafeteria lunch - four for 25 cents at the old GCVI high school cafeteria in the early fifties.

We always looked forward to the wonderful garden parties put on at Barrie Hill, Mimosa or Speedside. Mother miraculously found some money for each

of us to spend at the lunch counter. Then we'd sit together to enjoy the entertainment after the ball games. Mom possessed wonderful public relations, charm, and interacted with the different people who would drive in the lane. She always provided us children with delicious treats. The travelling bakers, Bill and Donny Quant of Priory Bakery in Guelph, would come on Wednesdays and Saturdays with their truck loaded with big double loaves of fresh bread, lemon slices, cookies or tarts.

The Rawleigh man would come in with puddings, drink mixes and wonderful spices. And yes, there were even pedlars who would try to sell linens or clothes from their cars to the farm ladies.

Amelia Buczek.
Photo courtesy of Helen (Buczek) Lenko.

As "spiritual director," each Sunday mom and dad would drive us to St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church at Oustic. We would arrive early to chat with fellow worshippers: the Synotts, Gilfillans, Keanes, Landonis, and McCanns. In winter, we gathered to chat around the stove at the back of the church until Father Callaghan would signal that mass was to begin.

As we grew into our teens things became a little easier for mom. The farm received hydro, water, telephone, a real furnace, a TV, and we knew mom would always be there with supper ready when we got off the high school bus.

Later in the '50s mom worked for Charlie Keane on the 6th Line on his vegetable farm. She took me one day to pick yellow beans in July. My career as bean picker lasted one day as my knees crumpled under me. But mom stayed on for a long time helping the Keanes who were very kind to her and so provided work to add to mom's spending money to buy us things for high school.

We were enriched by our Polish/Ukrainian heritage in our home by speaking to our parents in their mother tongue. Mom prepared wonderful Polish food - cabbage rolls, pirogi, sauerkraut dishes and kielbasa sausage, as well as special breads for Easter and Christmas.

Sunday afternoons found us driving to the outskirts of Guelph to a farm for grand Polish picnics, good polka music playing and whole families enjoying each other's company.

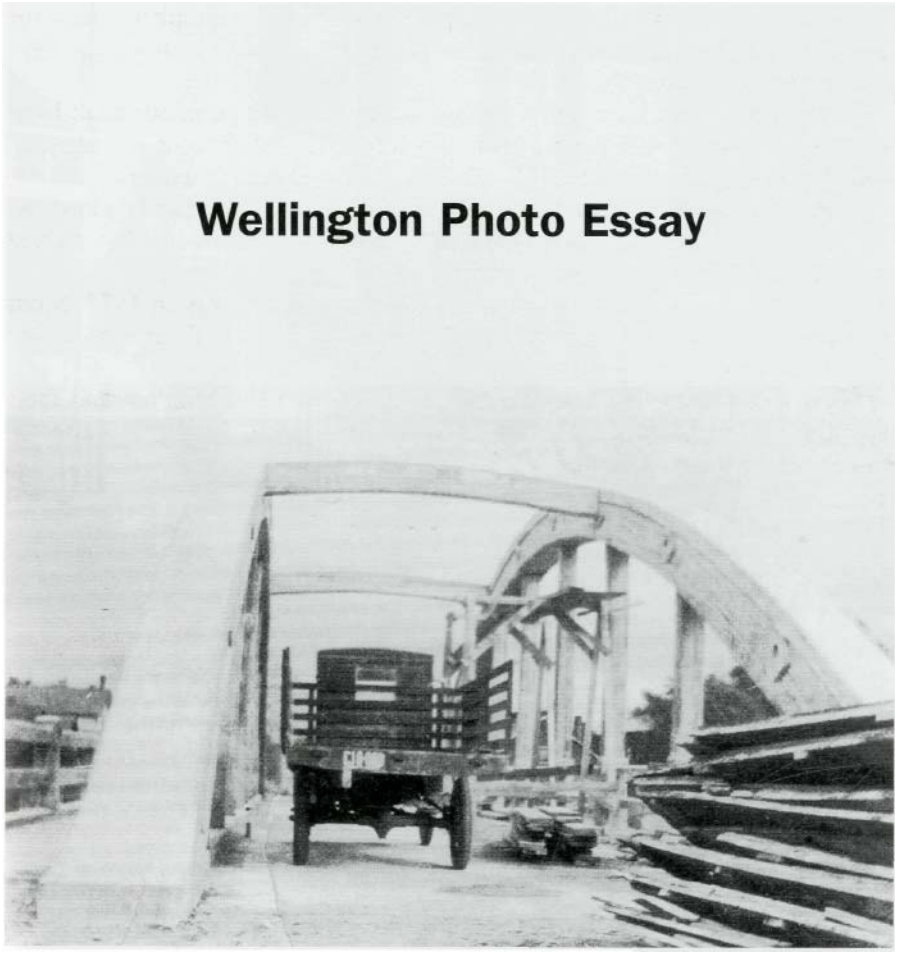
Little did we realise as children how handy it would be in our adult lives later on to converse with people in another language. Polish weddings, dances, concerts were always a welcome break from the never-ending work at the farm.

As we became adults and married one after another, mom and dad moved into Guelph behind the Elliot Home and enjoyed their garden, flowers and working at the Homewood in the 1960s and 70s.

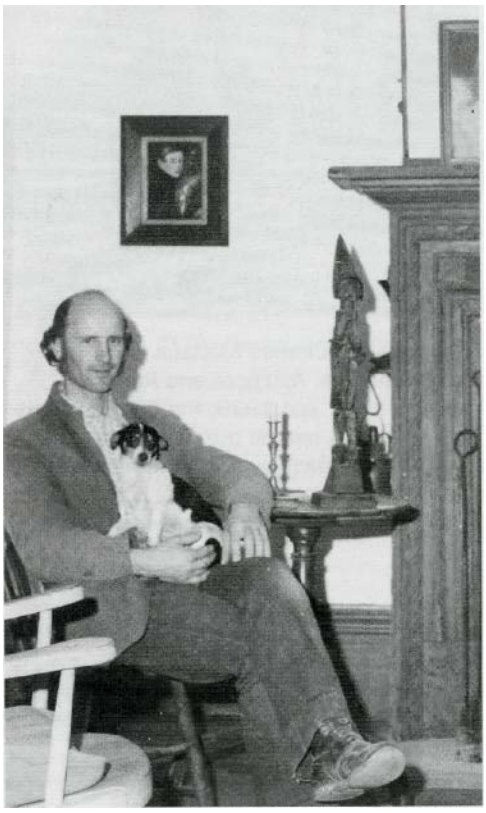
Later on, poor health stepped in and father passed away in 1977. Morn remarried to a widower family friend and enjoyed visits from family and friends for many years.

She passed away in February 2001 and left her four children and their families with wonderful memories of their days on the 5th Line of Eramosa, filled with a mother's and father's love and security.

Grateful acknowledgement to my Aunt Irene of Calgary who researched mom's family and her background by travelling to the Ukraine and visiting with mother s sister s family in her village. She undertook the task of creating a book with many pictures showing mom s life story. She kindly made copies for each of us so we could have a written history of our parents.



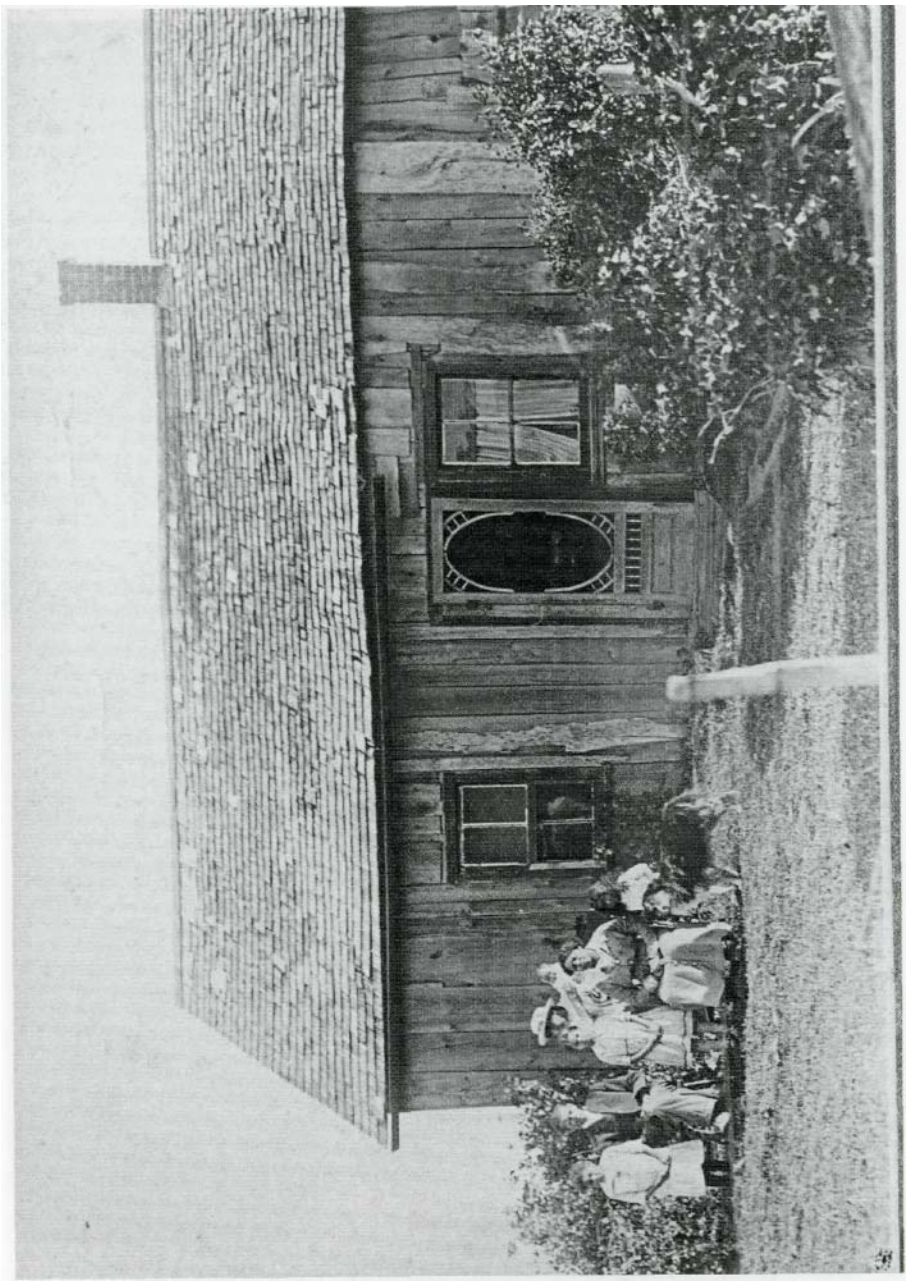
Charles Mattaini, (1874-1847). Twenty-two-year-old Charles Mattaini came from Vergiate, Italy, to live with his sister and brother-in-law, Asumpta and Romeo Landoni, in West Garafraxa Township. Between 1902 and 1929, the Fergus-based construction business he developed thrived and took him all over Wellington County and even to Yorkton, Saskatchewan. His company built barn foundations, the original Fergus Swimming Pool, and the Grand Theatre. He built a lighthouse at Long Point on Lake Erie but his unique bridges with their stone arches and pillars were his special legacy to the County. Photo: WCMA ph 3035.



Henry Wissler, (1860-1932). Henry's father, Sem, came from Pennsylvania to found Salem in 1840. Henry, clerk of the township of Nichol, and a lawyer, realtor and mortgage broker, married Barbara Foote, daughter of Elora's first reeve.

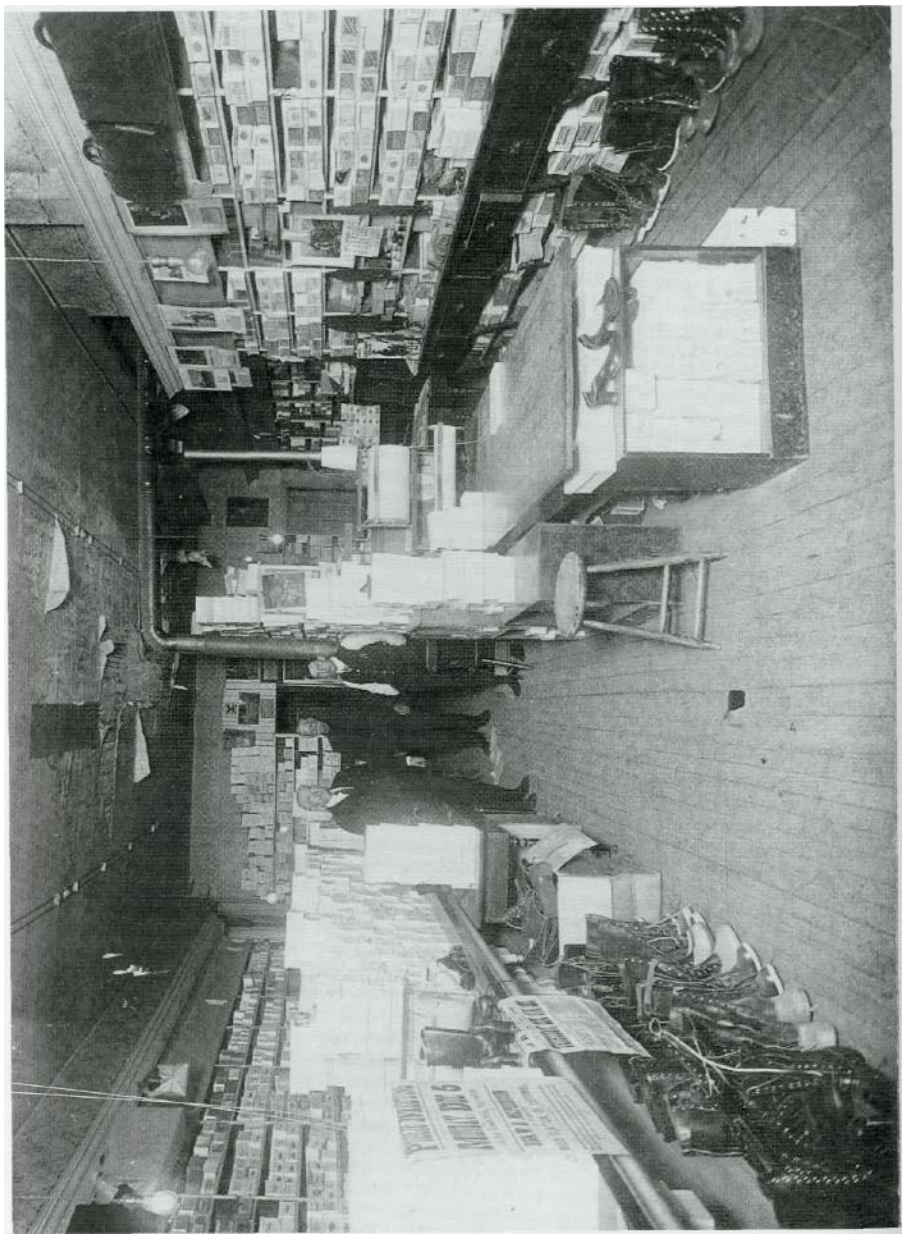
Photo: WCMA ph 10390.

Yosef Drenters, (1930-1983). In 1951, Yosef emigrated with his family to a farm in Eramosa township from Belgium. Here, he began his career as sculptor using pieces of old farm machinery. This immigrant understood and experienced the settler's love for an adopted land. In 1960, Drenters bought and began restoring the rundown Rockwood Academy. This building, to Yosef's mind, was a work of monumental sculpture that had come under his care. Photo WCMA ph 11237.



Mabel (Lawson) Hisson, (1890-1974). The granddaughter of fugitive slave, Dangerfield Lawson, Mabel Hisson bore 7 children between 1912 and 1928 on the farm just west of Glen Allan, Peel township. One son, Norman, remained in the area until 1999, the last surviving descendant of Black pioneers in the area.

Photo: WCMA ph 5786. WELLINGTON COUNTY



D. Sutherland Boots & Shoes, Harriston, 1921. The employees were known as the "League of Nations", because they came from such varied backgrounds: John Settergreen - Swedish, David Livingston - English; Donald Douglas - Scottish; Gottlieb Walters - German. Photo WCMA ph 13420.

Mario Carl Landoni, (1877-1962). In 1907, Mario Carl Landoni and his new bride, Celeste Braghini, came to Fergus from Vergiate, Italy, and began his construction company. By the end of WW I, Mario was Police Chief and Town Superintendent. He worked with his son, Mario, until 1950, specializing in building schools in Wellington County and several neighbouring counties. He repaired the steeple of St. Joseph's Catholic Church after the storm in November, 1911. He removed the tower and gave it the Norman turreted look it has today. photo: WCMA ph 15746.

Our Contributors

Although she has lived in a number of places, **lian goodall** considers herself to be from Wellington County. Her most recent book is *Singing Towards the Future: The Story of Portia White* (Napoleon Publishing), and a biography about photographer Yousuf Karsh will be published in 2007. As most of her historical writing is done for people under the age of fourteen, lian is thrilled to be able to use words with more than two syllables in this essay.

Debra Nash-Chambers teaches part-time at Wilfrid Laurier University and she enjoys the notoriety of being a Protestant member of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association.

Helen (Buczek) Lenko went to S. S. #6, Eramosa, GCVI and Hamilton Teachers' College in 1957. After teaching at St. Ann's School in Hamilton, she married William Lenko of Beamsville in 1963. One of their 4 children, son Daniel, now runs the family farm and winery. Helen bakes pies and cookies for the winery customers. She enjoys doing family histories. She is happy to have been asked to contribute her mother's story for the WCH publication.

Elysia DeLaurentis obtained an Hons. BA in Art History from the University of Guelph in 1998. While there she worked as assistant slide- librarian in the Fine Art Department, describing historical images, and learning way too much about her professors' "other" lives. She then undertook two years of graduate studies in Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Offered employment at the Wellington County Archives, she accepted, leaving her unfinished thesis to gather dust. Elysia is currently President of the Guelph Historical Society, and Coordinator of the Pilkington Township History Book. She and husband Ernie Kalwa moved to Elora in 2001 where they now live with Sarah the Wonderdog.

Like Forrester, **Greg Oakes** learned to skate in Fergus. Living in Salem where all the skating was done on the Irvine, he never got up any real speed. One has to pace oneself in those winter Saturday dawn to dusk hockey games.

Ross Irwin doesn't golf or curl nor spend money on a lavish life style. He just enjoys researching strange items of local history and writing about it - does that make him strange? Since last year was the "Year of the Veteran" it was appropriate to write on the local initial patriotism as found in the formation of home guard units.

Helen Goodall has only left Wellington County for several years during WW II, and to give birth to her three daughters during the 1960s. Lincoln County was her other home. Daughter Han, researching her current book about Karsh, found Sarkis Sarkisian's name in *The Georgetown Boys* and encouraged her mother to develop his story. Helen still remembers Sarkis, the kind and gentle man, "honest as the sun" (according to author, Jean Hutchinson), from their one meeting at St. John's United Church, Belwood.

Al and Sheila Koop researched, conducted interviews and edited *Older Voices Among Us Among Us: Listening to the Longtime Residents of Wellington County* in 1980 and presented at numerous oral history conferences throughout the 1980s. Sheila teaches French at Elora Public School, writes poetry in both official languages, enjoys travel and studying Spanish. Al writes sporadically and can often be seen on the streets, with his troupe of young players, conducting heritage tours and plays.

Again, our gratitude to Wayne Bridge and James Gow who have read the manuscript at its later stages to catch typographic mistakes and egregious errors. Credits for the illustrations appear in the captions for example [Wellington County Museum and Archives] WCMAph 1234. Digital scanning courtesy of Karen Wagner, Archivist, Cover illustration courtesy of Pat Mestern: Enrico Caruso, Sam Fardella and Charles Mattaini in a studio portrait taken when Caruso was in Toronto in 1920. From his initial work picking sugar-beets in New York State at 12 years of age, Sicilian immigrant, Sam Fardella (centre) became a Fergus businessman who built and operated the Grand Theatre from 1928 until 1970. Rear cover illustration, *Victory Views and News*, April 1942. Printing: Ampersand, Guelph.

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The editors welcome for publication articles relating to all aspects of the history of Wellington County

Victory

VIEWS and NEWS

EDITION 1 VOLUME 1

April, 1942

Issued by Personnel Department
and Employees' Works Council

BEATTY FACTORIES

(Sitting, left to right): L. Crust, E. Thompson, Mrs. Sarkisian, F. Woods, Leone McKade, W. Steuno.

(Standing, left to right): B. Gomm, R. Armstrong, P. Sheehey, R. Dunbar, A. Galbraith, R. Gilkinson, N. Gomm, D. Monis, M. Aitken, M. Lawrence, F. Skippen, L. Armstrong, P. Maximchuck, Hostess Mrs. Steele.

The home of Mrs. Steele, Matron, was recently the scene of a happy gathering of Forge and Press girls. The occasion was in honour of the new bride and groom, Mr. and Mrs. Sarkisian. Mrs. W. G. Beatty, wife of the president of Beatty Bros. Limited, gave Mr. and Mrs. Sarkisian an occasional chair on behalf of the firm.

An electric iron was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Beatty. A desk and chair were presented to the newlyweds by the girls. A tasty luncheon served by Mrs. Steele assisted by Mrs. Beatty, completed a most delightful social evening.

THE SARKISIANS

Mrs. Sarkisian, born in the Ukraine, was formerly Anne Popiel and was a very efficient member of the Forge and Press Dept. She came to Fergus from Portage La Prairie.

Mr. Sarkisian, a native of Armenia, came to Fergus from the Armenian School of Training in Georgetown. For several years he was employed at the Beatty Experimental Farm where he was highly thought of. Mr. Sarkisian is now working in Harvey Nixon's Department, Washer B.